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General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

35th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 17 October 2000, at 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: reports of the General Committee

Third report of the General Committee
(A/55/250/Add.2)

The President: I should like to draw the attention of representatives to the third report of the General Committee, document A/55/250/Add.2, concerning the following three requests: first, a request by the Netherlands for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons"; secondly, a request by several countries for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit"; and a request by a number of countries for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula".

In paragraph 1 of the report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons", should be included in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee further decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the additional item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 2 of the report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit", should be included in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee further decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the additional item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

00-69498 (E)

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided

The President: In paragraph 3 of the report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula", should be included in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided

The President: The General Committee further decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the additional item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided

Agenda item 11

Report of the Security Council (A/55/2)

The President: I give the floor to the President of the Security Council, Mr. Martin Andjaba, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): It is with great pleasure that I introduce the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, in document A/55/2, covering the period from 16 June 1999 to 15 June 2000.

The report clearly shows the intensity of the Security Council's working agenda dur.ng the reporting period. During the year under review, the Council held 144 formal meetings, adopted 57 resolutions ano issued 38 statements by the President. In addition, the Council members held 194 consultations of the whole. The Council also considered over 85 reports by the Secretary-General and reviewed and processed more than 1,165 documents and communications from States and regional and other international organizations. Furthermore, the Council dispatched four missions to various conflict areas.

In line with its primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council considered a wide range of issues. Ensuring stability in Africa and other regions has remained high on the agenda of the Council. With regard to Africa, the Council extensively considered situations in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Eritrea/Ethiopia, Somalia, Burundi and Western Sahara. In this connection, Security Council missions were dispatched to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Eritrea/Ethiopia. Peacekeeping operations in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic have been successfully transformed into post-conflict peace-building support offices.

The Security Council also considered conflict situations in the Middle East, East Timor; Afghanistan; Tajikistan; Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Abkhazia, Georgia. Missions were dispatched to East Timor and Kosovo.

The Security Council considered decisions and adopted statements on a number of broad peace and security issues, including the protection of civilians in armed conflict; children and armed conflict; and disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants. It also considered HIV/AIDS and international peace and security. In dealing with these matters the Security Council remained highly conscious of its responsibility and of the role being played by other United Nations bodies.

During the reporting period the Security Council went to great lengths to conduct its business in a more transparent manner. In this regard, many open meetings and briefings were held with the participation of the wider membership of the United Nations.

The members of the Security Council trust that the report will shed more light and provide useful information on the activities of the Council during the year. They attach utmost significance and importance to this annual considerati·n of the report by the General Assembly as a means of enhancing further the work of these two principal organs of the United Nations. The members of the Security Council look forward to the comments and suggestions of the Member States during this meeting.

Let me conclude by expressing the appreciation of the members of the Security Council to the staff of the Security Council secretariat for their dedication and

tireless efforts, which remain indispensable to the efficiency of the work of the Security Council.

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus thanks Ambassador Andjaba of Namibia for having introduced the annual report of the Security Council to the current session of the General Assembly. We would also like to take note of the important role played last year by Namibia in the work of the Council.

Belarus is convinced that the annual reporting practice of the Security Council remains an important part of the efforts to make the activities of the Council as open and transparent as possible, as well as to allow the Member States to adequately evaluate the decisions taken by the Council in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The work of the Security Council was particularly involved last year, given the numerous conflicts in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other regions of the world. The Council's efforts were crucial to the maintenance of international peace and security. The international community saw the Council adopt many important decisions and resolutions, as reflected in the present report.

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus notes with satisfaction that the Council is examining more and more subjects besides current conflicts. Increasingly, the Council considers the root causes that lead to crises and military confrontation. Last year we witnessed the Council's important debates on the participation of children in armed conflicts, the reintegration of ex-combatants, international terrorism and the illicit trafficking of diamonds and other natural resources — a trade that has been used not for promoting peace, but to support forces involved in conflicts.

Last year, problems relating to sanctions were a special part of the Council's work. We welcome the fact that the practice in this field of the principal United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security has became more sophisticated. The extremely complex humanitarian situations in Iraq and in other States on which sanctions have been imposed continue to call for further work to reduce the negative impact of sanctions on civilians. In this context, the Republic of Belarus notes the particular importance of the inclusion in the annual report of the reports of the sanctions committees, whose operations had until now been absolutely closed to the majority of States. Belarus supports the continuation of this practice.

Belarus welcomes the fact noted in the report that, compared with the previous period, the Council held significantly more open meetings last year. This is undoubtedly an important step in making the Council's work more transparent. Belarus will support all further measures that allow non-member States to participate more fully in the Council's deliberations on all issues. In this context, we consider that the next important step could be publishing as press releases issued from United Nations Headquarters the content of the daily briefings that give an account of the closed consultations of the Council.

We believe that the summaries that the Council members prepare regarding the work of the Council during their presidencies are of crucial importance. Belarus believes that these summaries facilitate a more profound analysis of the Council's work and the finding of new ways to improve the work of the Council.

The Millennium Summit and the high-level Security Council meeting demonstrated to the world the unanimity of the Member States with regard to the priority role of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. Strong adherence to the Charter's principles in this regard is, we believe, the way to ensure that future generations are spared the scourge of war. Belarus will be submitting its candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the Council for 2002-2003 on the basis of its firm commitment to the fulfilment of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration adopted by the heads of States and Governments and its commitment to work vigorously to further improve the Council's work.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): I wish to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Martin Andjaba of Namibia, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

We have often heard the Council reiterating that it has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as that it has the authority to act on behalf of all Member States in carrying out its duties in fulfilment of this responsibility. These are very important provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and it is precisely these provisions that made the Security Council into

the most powerful organ of the United Nations system. However, it is equally essential to recall that this unique authority was delegated to the Security Council in conjunction with its obligation to report regularly to the General Assembly. Article 24 of the Charter is very clear about this link.

Ukraine attaches particular importance to the item "Report of the Security Council", as it has always believed that its main purpose was to uphold the principle of accountability, which we consider fundamental to the effectiveness of the Organization's activities in the area of peace and security. This is the first time that Ukraine has made its contribution to this important discussion as an elected member of the Council.

Indeed, consideration of this agenda item offers the General Assembly a unique opportunity to make a comprehensive assessment of the Council's activities over the past year. My delegation believes that if we evaluate this period from the larger perspective of the past decade, we may find many reasons to characterize it as the promising beginning of a new phase in the Security Council's history.

The significant shift in peacekeeping activities could be one of the most convincing arguments in support of that assertion. According to the Secretary-General's latest report on the work of the Organization, the size of the Council's authorized deployment has almost tripled over the past 12 months, standing now at approximately 45,000 uniformed personnel.

The significant increase in peacekeeping operations, as well as some serious setbacks on the ground, initiated the current efforts to improve the effectiveness of this key instrument available to the United Nations in discharging its responsibility for peace and security. Ukraine will continue encouraging the Council to make a major contribution to this endeavour.

We may also recall how harshly the Security Council was criticized not so long ago for its lack of response to the demands of the African continent. Today, we have ample evidence of the major drift in the Council's overall policy towards Africa. The changes are really tangible. The substantially expanded United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, the authorization of the second phase of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia and the Council's action on the report by the Panel of Experts on Violations of Security Council Sanctions against UNITA are only some of the Council's highlights related to Africa.

The major task ahead is to sustain this action-oriented stance of the Council towards Africa and to focus it on preventing the recurrence or further aggravation of conflicts. It is high time to think in more practical terms about strengthening the overall capacity of the United Nations for effective preventive action. In this connection, I would like to reiterate the proposal put forward by President Kuchma of Ukraine that a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy be developed for the United Nations. Ukraine has made a number of suggestions as to what could become concrete elements of such a strategy. In particular, one of its key components could be the establishment of United Nations regional centres for conflict prevention. Another integral element could be conflict prevention operations, which should gain prominence as a qualitatively new model of peacekeeping activities.

In this regard, let me draw the Assembly's attention to the increasing impact of the conflict in Sierra Leone and its further spillover into the neighbouring countries, in particular Guinea. The international community must be prepared to act in urgent support of the intention of the Economic Community of West African States to prepare for the preventive deployment of an observer force on the borders of the Mano River Union countries.

Another important change in the Security Council's work over the past year is the rebirth of its special missions to conflict areas, which have been dispatched over the past 12 months to East Timor, Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Eritrea/Ethiopia. The recently completed mission to Sierra Leone — the largest ever such mission of the Security Council — proved that this instrument has become indispensable to the effective discharge of that organ's responsibilities.

We have also seen the Security Council starting to rethink its overall policy with regard to economic sanctions in order to improve their effectiveness as well as avoid their negative side effects. In April 2000, the Council established a working group on sanctions to develop relevant recommendations on those matters. In May 2000, the Council set an important precedent

by defining time limits for sanctions at the stage of their imposition. Ukraine believes that it is very important to ensure that the new trends in this domain bring about a clear and coherent methodology for the imposition and lifting of sanctions that takes into consideration the concerns of civilian populations and the interests of third countries.

Although the list of new developments and changes I have referred to is far from complete, I think it gives enough grounds to state that the work of the Security Council during the past year represents a clear step forward. This assessment is even more convincing if we recall the Council's record from June 1998 to June 1999. It was marked by a set of disappointments that made the larger international community question the ability of the Council to play a leading role in the maintenance of international peace and security and to respond adequately to emerging crises and other challenges.

It is very important now to sustain these very encouraging trends in the Council's activities into the future. A significant contribution to this major task was made by the Security Council Summit held on 7 September 2000. The results of that important meeting represent a vivid demonstration of the Security Council's willingness to remain a functioning and indispensable actor in international affairs in the new century. Ukraine will pay special attention to the practical implementation of the Security Council Summit commitments.

I would also like to use this occasion to restate Ukraine's determination to continue upholding by practical deeds its responsible status as a current member of the Security Council. Ukraine is redeeming its pledge to the member States of the General Assembly, which conferred on it the high honour of serving on the Council. I would like to stress that, for the past year, there has been no single newly established or substantially expanded peacekeeping operation — from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Sierra Leone, southern Lebanon, Kosovo, East Timor and Ethiopia and Eritrea — to which Ukraine has not contributed trained and properly equipped personnel.

I would like to conclude by offering our warm congratulations to Colombia, Ireland, Mauritius, Norway and Singapore on their recent election to serve on the Security Council as of 1 January 2001. Ukraine is looking forward to close and productive cooperation with the newly elected members of the Council and wishes them every success in discharging their very important responsibilities.

Mr. Sharma (India): May I begin by thanking the President of the Security Council for introducing the report of the Council. I congratulate Colombia, Ireland, Mauritius, Norway and Singapore on their election last week to the Council.

All Member States have a deep interest in the work of the Security Council and we attach importance to this discussion, mandated by Articles 24 (3) and 15 of the Charter, which require the Council to submit and the General Assembly to receive and consider annual and special reports. The Charter clearly intends that the Council, to which the general membership entrusts special responsibilities, should report to it each year on the issues and situations pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security it has dealt with, what it has done and the impact of its actions. It is expected that these reports should be comprehensive, substantive and forthright.

Unfortunately, the Council's reports still lack both substance and candour. Frustration with the Council's sketchy reporting led to the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 51/193 of 1996, in which it called upon the Council, inter alia, to include information on the consultations of the whole; to highlight the extent to which resolutions of the General Assembly on issues falling within the scope of the General Assembly and the Security Council had been taken into account by the Council in its decision-making; and to strengthen further the section in the report on the steps taken by the Council to improve its working methods.

The Council has ignored this resolution. The report before us, a 550-page to me, is, like its predecessors, simply a compilation of documents, most of which have already been circulated as official documents. We ask the members of the Council to consider if the veil of secrecy which they draw over its work serves a purpose. To the general membership, it appears both lofty, because it flouts the expressed wishes of the General Assembly, and self-defeating, because it feeds suspicions that the Council is secretive because it evades disclosure. As to the revelations over which it may wish to draw a veil, one can draw from several choices: questions as to effectiveness,

selectiveness of engagement, pressure of domestic constituencies or narrow agendas.

If transparency were the guiding principle, the Council would not need to conduct most of its work in informal meetings, a mechanism not even mentioned in its provisional rules of procedure. Rule 48 states that unless it decides otherwise, the Security Council shall meet in public. The holding of informal meetings should be the exception and not the unwritten rule that it has become.

The Council might very well argue in defence that it now holds public debates under almost every presidency. This, however, would be perilously close to the Council telling the general membership to eat cake. When the general membership asked for open meetings of the Council, it did not want to turn the Council into a debating society, which is what it now becomes every once in a while; the membership wanted it, before it acted on matters of peace and security, to hear the views of countries outside the Council that might have a point to make, a perspective to share or advice to offer, which it would be useful and prudent to factor into and reflect in its decisions. The open debates of the Council have no bearing on the Council's decisions, and frequently they are also on issues outside its mandate. As decisions are taken before the Council hears the views of others, the statements made are of academic interest, a mere formality. The Council needs to consider what purpose these open debates serve, if any. We asked the Council to be transparent; what is offered is symbolism.

Once again, sadly, the suspicion is not far-fetched that the closed doors of the Council may reflect a closed mind and a fear of being told truths it would much rather do without, of being given facts that contradict its preferences or of accepting advice that undermines its settled orientation. Nowhere does this create more of a problem than in the complex peacekeeping operations it has set up. The Council decides, in what is essentially splendid isolation, how an operation should evolve; it certainly has the right to do so under the Charter, but since the tasks it sets have to be discharged by the forces on the ground, it would be sensible to consult troop contributors and profit from their experience. Instead, the Council only goes through the motions, speaking to the troop contributors the day before a resolution is adopted. This is merely the courteous presentation of a fait accompli; it serves little purpose — not the Council's, not the host country's, not those of the troop contributors and certainly not those of the operation.

In May and June this year, when the Council held closed meetings, including a private meeting with the Ministers of the Economic Community of West African States to address the crisis in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), India and other troop contributors asked that we be invited to it. We thought the Council would be anxious to hear the views of the countries most heavily involved, and were astonished that our request was turned down. We have never been told why. This indifferent treatment is unacceptable when it is troop contributors, and not the members of the Council, including those who believe that they have a special responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, that put the lives of their troops on the line for the cause of the United Nations.

Peacekeeping operations mandated by the Council will be successful only if their tasks are doable and they are given adequate resources. A partnership between the Council and the peacekeepers is not just crucial, but a prerequisite. This indeed is the spirit of Article 44 of the Charter. And it is no surprise that the Brahimi Panel report, which was welcomed at the Council's Summit on 7 September, has also recommended this. We hope that the Council will do some soul-searching and, in the future, will genuinely involve the troop-contributing countries, in a spirit of partnership, in decisions regarding peacekeeping operations, including on their mandates. The recent private meeting between troop contributors and the Council on UNAMSIL is a good precedent. However, it is not enough only to give troop contributors a hearing; their views should be reflected, if they are reasonable, in the mandates of the Council. The Council should institutionalize this mechanism.

The situation in Afghanistan remains a cause of deep anxiety to the international community, particularly to the countries in the region. The Taliban's quest for a military solution, their support for international terrorism and their utter disregard for the humanitarian crisis they have created in Afghanistan all continue. We are concerned over both the suffering they have inflicted on the Afghan people and their destabilizing role in the region. The Security Council, which has repeatedly expressed grave concern over the developments in Afghanistan, has urged the Taliban to seek a peaceful solution to the crisis and to end its

support for terrorism, but to no avail. Security Council resolution 1267 (1999) was adopted over a year ago, but the Taliban remain intransigent. This is a challenge to the Council.

Even as the Council has not lived up to expectations regarding its activities in maintaining international peace and security, particularly in Africa, it has continued to try to assume a role for itself in areas such as health, the welfare of children and humanitarian assistance, which are clearly beyond its mandate and fall under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly. This does not help the smooth functioning of the United Nations.

A case in point is the Council's assuming for itself the power to set up judicial bodies. Nothing under the Charter gives it the right to set up the tribunals that it has, nor indeed can it be demonstrated that those set up have in fact contributed to the maintenance of peace and security. In fact, they have on occasion become a complicating factor, and it would be hard to justify the exponential rise in the cost of maintaining them. There is now the piquant development of the recommendation to the Security Council from the Presidents of the two Tribunals that financial provisions should be made to recompense those who might have been unfairly accused before them; potentially, therefore, the General Assembly could be looking at huge sums of money which would have to be found to compensate persons wrongfully brought before tribunals which were wrongfully set up. Again, the General Assembly would be merely a passive and helpless spectator, without a role to play, except to accept the financial implications of decisions arbitrarily taken by the Council. These are systemic problems that surely need to be addressed.

Many of the flaws in the functioning of the Council are structural. Its composition and structure are demonstrably out of touch with ground realities. The Council neither reflects nor represents the aspirations and views of the larger membership. It is a relic of a defunct era. The solution lies in reforming and restructuring the Council. The inclusion of developing countries would make the Council more representative, relevant and responsive, enhancing the quality of its decisions and their acceptability within the general membership.

We have always believed that sanctions are a blunt instrument and should be carefully used when their imposition becomes imperative. Reports from the United Nations system about the humanitarian crisis caused by the sanctions on Iraq are disquieting. We have also seen the report by the Secretary-General that over 1,200 contracts worth over $2 billion under the oil-for-food programme are on hold. Clearly, the Council needs to address this issue with dispatch and sensitivity.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Only last month, our leaders met in this Hall to reaffirm their common commitment to the United Nations as our instrument of choice to strengthen and expand international cooperation as we enter the new millennium. It is with a view to building such a United Nations that we have offered our comments on the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Kastrup (Germany): The report of the Security Council has always been a comprehensive and long document which bears witness to the workload of the Council. All members of the Security Council therefore deserve our respect for shouldering this burden in exercising the duties conferred upon them by the Member States, under Article 24 of the Charter.

I would like to elaborate on three points. How can we really implement Article 24 and reform the relations between the Security Council and the general membership? How does the issue of Security Council reform relate to a peacekeeping reform, as initiated by the Brahimi report? And finally, how can we reform our own working culture and not let the principle of consensus stop all reform efforts?

One of the most obvious innovations in the Council's recent practice has been overlooked by the report, namely, the re-introduction of private meetings. I am not a psychologist who can give the Assembly an explanation for that. Since October of last year, I have been writing to the Presidents of the Security Council on a regular basis to ask them to allow non-members of the Council to participate in the Council's deliberations in cases where their interests are especially affected. Last January, I submitted a memorandum containing proposals on how such meetings could include a wider membership of the United Nations and yet remain confidential in character. That memorandum on the format and modalities of private meetings has been discussed in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. Some of the memorandum's

ideas were incorporated into this year's report of the Working Group.

The changes in the Security Council's procedures over the last year were quite significant. Instead of automatically coming together behind closed doors, the Council has moved towards being more open to the general membership. In some cases, interactive debates have taken place. In other cases, however, the non-members of the Council were not allowed to participate in the discussion, as provided for in the Council's provisional rules of procedure. I believe this development should receive closer attention in the future.

Statistics indicate that the tendency of the Security Council to meet behind closed doors is continuing. We deeply regret this, and I would like wholeheartedly to endorse everything that has been said about this problem by my Indian colleague. Therefore, two questions remain. How can parties involved be included prior to, and in, the actual consultations, and how can third parties with vital interests be enabled to participate in informal Security Council meetings? What types of procedures are available on a case-by-case basis without appearing arbitrary? This is not just a procedural or legal issue; it is, rather, a fundamental one. The more that especially affected countries are heard, the more legitimacy the Council's decisions will have and the more weight its resolutions will carry.

That brings me to my next point, namely, the Brahimi report and its linkage to the issue of Security Council reform. Among other things, the Brahimi Panel recommends that

> "The Security Council should leave in draft form resolutions authorizing missions with sizeable troop levels until such time as the Secretary-General has firm commitments of troops and other critical mission support elements, including peace-building elements, from Member States." (*A/55/305, para. 64 (b)*)

At a later stage, the reports states that

> "The Secretariat must tell the Security Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear, when formulating or changing mission mandates, and countries that have committed military units to an operation should have access to Secretariat briefings to the Council on matters affecting the safety and security of their personnel, especially those meetings with implications for a mission's use of force." (ibid., *para. 64 (d)*)

That is exactly the point that my Indian colleague has emphasized.

The Security Council should not only hear those Member States, but also take their views into consideration, the latter being the more important part of this communication exercise between the Security Council and the general membership. No Article of the Charter needs to be changed or amended for the Council to involve more Members in its deliberations and decision-making process on peacekeeping missions. As we all know, the Security Council is the master of its own procedures. That means that increasing the participation of a wider portion of the membership is a matter of political will.

After all, we are talking about the future of United Nations peacekeeping, which is the United Nations fundamental task, as well as the future of the United Nations as a whole. If there is no reform of the Security Council and its working methods, peacekeeping reform will remain incomplete.

The Secretary-General rightly stressed in his speech before the General Assembly on 12 September that

> "Consensus is highly desirable, but it need not mean waiting for absolute unanimity on every sub-clause among 189 Member States. The minority, often a very small minority, should not withhold its consent unreasonably. ... We can no longer afford to operate always at the level of the lowest, and slowest, common denominator." (*A/55/PV.10, p. 2*)

In practice, however, we do have to wait for that slowest common denominator, and important reform projects are being held hostage by a minority even though we can no longer afford to allow that to happen.

This year's deliberations of the Working Group on Security Council reform once again made it quite clear that because of the attitude of a minority it was not possible to agree on any substantial chapter in this year s report. The valuable efforts of both of our Vice-Chairmen, who had worked out an extremely well-balanced draft on general observations, were frustrated. Together with many other reform-minded

countries, we would have preferred the original version of the Vice-Chairmen's proposals. Fortunately, that original version has become an annex to the report, so the Bureau's assessment of the problems and perspectives of the reform debate are reflected in its entirety. I would recommend that everybody take a close look at this excellent paper and get an idea where we stand and where we might go from here.

We need not only a reform of the Security Council and of United Nations peacekeeping, but also of our own working methods. Seven years of reform debate are enough. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council should reform their working culture and methods and breathe life into the words they produce. Action, not words, are needed.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank the President of the Security Council for the report he has submitted to the General Assembly at its present session. It contains comprehensive and detailed information about what the Security Council did in a working year that straddled two centuries. Today I take this opportunity to share my views on several issues, and on United Nations peacekeeping operations in particular.

Peacekeeping operations are an important means by which the United Nations fulfils its obligations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security. On the one hand, the past year witnessed an increase in both the number and the scale of United Nations peacekeeping operations. On the other hand, such operations failed to yield the expected results in Sierra Leone and other places, highlighting to some extent the fact that such operations do indeed have problems that need to be solved immediately. We believe that it takes more than the political will of Member States and sufficient resources to strengthen the peacekeeping capacity of the United Nations. The Security Council should be more rational and more purpose-specific and case-specific in making decisions in this field.

First, better communication and consultation with the troop-contributing countries is crucial. Whether it is a matter of authorizing the deployment of a new peacekeeping mission or of amending the mandate of a current operation, the views of the contributors must be heeded and respected. Consultations should be conducted on a regular basis among the members of the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat on the situation on the ground, conditions of the deployed troops and other matters. Such communication can be carried out at a variety of levels; it can take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York and/or in the field, where the peacekeeping troops are deployed. The form of such communication should also be varied with a view to ensuring its effectiveness and efficiency.

Secondly, the Security Council must try to do a better job of pooling expertise and information in the decision-making process and in the review process. In that regard, on the one hand, the Secretariat should strengthen its capacity to collect, collate and analyse information so that it can supply the Security Council, in a timely manner, with accurate, comprehensive and reliable information concerning the situation on the ground and concerning specific needs for deployment. The Security Council, for its part, should also work hard to develop more channels of communication and to listen to information from a wider range of sources. In recent years, some of the Security Council missions to the sites of peacekeeping operations have been successful. They have helped the Security Council gain a comprehensive understanding of given situations and formulate solutions accordingly. The Security Council should therefore continue to do this in the future.

Thirdly, the Security Council should substantially improve its cooperation with the regional organizations and countries concerned to address hot-spot issues with a view to safeguarding regional stability. Those regional organizations and countries can often be pivotal to the solution of such issues, which, when mishandled can easily spill over to neighbouring countries and to the entire region. Therefore, when seeking solutions to such issues, the Security Council must have in mind the big picture of the whole region, must attach due importance to the views of the regional organizations and countries concerned and must strengthen cooperation with them in carrying out peacekeeping operations.

To sum up, coordination among the Security Council, troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat's Department of Peacekeeping Operations, relevant field missions and the regional organizations and countries concerned should be further strengthened. There should be an established regime and mechanism for such coordination, and it should become a regular practice of the Security Council. It takes joint efforts by all Member States to strengthen the peacekeeping capacity

of the United Nations. The report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi has provided Member States with a good basis for discussion. It is our hope that those recommendations in the report that enjoy broad agreement and that are easy to carry out can be implemented as soon as possible.

In the past year, the Security Council has held quite a number of discussions on hot-spot issues in Africa. It remains a major challenge, however, for the Council to find timely, effective and durable solutions to those issues. We hope that the declaration (Security Council resolution 1318 (2000), annex) adopted at the Security Council summit meeting last September, especially those parts that relate to Africa, will be implemented in an earnest and effective way.

Last year, when adopting its resolutions on the arms embargo against Ethiopia and Eritrea and on the diamond embargo against Sierra Leone, the Security Council for the first time explicitly set time-frames for the embargoes. By doing so, the Council achieved a major breakthrough in its sanctions work, because it rightly responded to the call of a vast number of Member States.

We have always supported the Security Council's efforts to improve its working methods, transparency and efficiency so that it can better carry out its responsibilities with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of all Member States. The Chinese delegation is ready to continue, along with other delegations, to work constructively to that end.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take this opportunity to thank Member States for the support they showed by electing Colombia as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period 2001-2002. Colombia assumes that challenge with a great sense of responsibility, and will maintain positions that conform strictly to the United Nations Charter and its fundamental principles.

After looking through the report before us on the work of the Security Council (A/55/2), I should like to focus on three issues. The first is the methodology of the report. We recognize and applaud the improvements made in the content of the report and in the methodology used to prepare it. However, as we have already said on other occasions, a major problem remains: The inadequacy of information for States that are not members of the Security Council, owing to the high number of informal meetings. In the period under review, according to the report, there were 144 formal meetings. But 194 informal consultations also took place, of which non-members know nothing except for what each country is able to find out for itself. That is a clear example of how ill-informed are States not part of the Security Council.

Colombia understands that certain meetings must be held in private owing to the sensitivity of the issues under discussion, but there are occasions on which we believe that there is room for openness, for the sake of transparency in the decisions taken. Problems of international peace and security are of equal concern to members and to non-members of the Council. For that reason, we stress the need to reform current practice, or at least to consider alternative ways to incorporate the opinions and viewpoints of non-member States that can contribute innovative ideas. Open debates have been an important step forward, but it is necessary to explore other mechanisms to increase the transparency of the Security Council's methods and procedures.

Secondly, as concerns the mandate of the Security Council, we believe that we need to evaluate the Council's competence. According to Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council has

> "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security".

There are "new" thematic items on the agenda that are not clearly linked to the maintenance of peace and security and that are usually discussed at least once a month in the Council. These issues have their own discussion forums, and therefore, when they are considered by the Security Council as they are now, they have an impact on the actions taken by other United Nations bodies. These are very important issues on the world's agenda and directly affect a great number of countries, and we therefore deem it inappropriate that they be excluded from wider consideration, unless this procedure genuinely benefits the Council's work.

Thirdly, in the past year there has been growing general dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the peace operations set up by the Security Council. A lack of clarity in the mandates of some missions is not only damaging the Organization's credibility but also leading to the loss of human lives. This must change. We cannot continue to excuse the Organization for

flaws that are repeated daily. The Security Council has the responsibility of reviewing this practice. We cannot keep sending Blue Helmets to areas of conflict as a sign of hope for civil society, when the truth is that perhaps they do not represent the best way to achieve peace.

If a mission's mandate is not stated clearly, with enough human, economic and logistical resources to ensure its success, it is better not to create such a mission. We cannot repeat the same mistakes such as the well-documented ones in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sierra Leone, to mention just a few. All of this is made even worse when we take into account the existing serious shortcomings in preventive actions.

For this reason, we believe that the Organization is facing a very important challenge today. The report submitted by the high-level Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, contained in document A/55/305, makes a series of recommendations for improving these operations. In order to adopt and adapt these recommendations, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat must work together. It would be pointless for each organ to present individual conclusions, as this would only further postpone the necessary reform of peacekeeping operations.

There are some who argue that this issue falls more within the purview of the Council than that of the General Assembly. It is clear that a great number of decisions concerning peace operations do fall within the purview of the Council. However, we must keep in mind that these decisions affect a great number of people and that there is therefore a need for open debate leading to a broadly representative consensus, in order not to further delay the reform we so desire.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize how important Security Council reform is for Colombia. The issues we have raised today make clear the need to transform the Security Council into a more representative body whose practices are transparent enough to secure the greatest possible trust and whose members can contribute in a more balanced way to its decisions.

Mr. Vento (Italy): I would like at the outset to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Namibia, Ambassador Andjaba, this month's Security Council President, on his clear and detailed presentation of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly. I also commend the Secretariat for its excellent preparatory work.

The report is a document that is invaluable to the necessary interaction between the Council and the General Assembly, pursuant to the recommendations of Article 15 of the Charter. As always, however, there is room for improvement. That is why I reiterate the wish my delegation has expressed in previous years that the report, rather than being a mere catalogue of meetings, resolutions and presidential statements, should be more substantial and analytical, which would allow us to better assess the work of the Security Council in all its aspects and effects, in the areas of both peace and resources. That is why I am in agreement with many of the remarks that have been made by the representative of India.

This annual occasion provides the entire membership of the General Assembly with an opportunity for collective reflection. I would like to take this opportunity to share my thoughts on the work of the Security Council in the fundamental area of peace and security.

There has been a sharp and healthy increase in the Security Council's activities in the past 12 months. The Council has had to address some of the most sensitive and difficult crises in the world, authorizing five new peacekeeping missions of great complexity and importance, namely in Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ethiopia and Eritrea. At the same time, it has reinforced the operation in southern Lebanon. Italy is actively involved in five of those six missions. Considering the marked rise in interventions decided on by the Council and the enormous consequences of this renewed activism for all Members of the Organization, we all have a right to question the way these mandates were adopted and to ask whether different and more effective means might have been used to achieve peace.

These same questions fuelled the report by the group of experts led by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, which the competent bodies — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat — must now assess for action. Another question we must ask is whether authentic and timely conflict prevention efforts have been made by the Security Council,

drawing on the full means indicated under Chapter VI of the Charter.

In the past year the United Nations has taken on growing responsibility for the maintenance of international peace, following an era in which the threat of intersecting vetoes had paralysed its ability to act. This became possible thanks not only to a growing convergence of views among the members of the Security Council, particularly the five permanent members, but also, and above all, to the common commitment and the joint contributions of the members of the General Assembly, because in many cases important players in crisis management and conflict resolution are members of the General Assembly but not necessarily of the Security Council.

The maintenance of international peace and security is, in fact, a collective responsibility to be shouldered by the international community as a whole. Some countries, because of their influence, strategic and geographic position as "front-line countries", offer contributions decisive to the political and stabilization processes at the heart of peace agreements, the prerequisite for any United Nations intervention. Other countries, whose numbers are growing, have deployed their contingents of troops and police forces on missions deliberated by the Security Council. The new "complex" missions in Kosovo and East Timor, which involve a form of international administration of the territories, require magistrates, judges, prison and border guards and civil administrators from countries that belong to different geographic groups.

Italy participates actively in this renewed commitment, both through its specialized personnel involved directly in United Nations missions and through the action conducted by the European Union in close connection with the United Nations. This is why the Secretary-General's recent talks in Strasbourg and Brussels, aimed at strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in the crucial area of conflict prevention and crisis management, should be strongly supported. This process was already implicit when the European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, made a statement on the Balkan crisis at the Security Council meeting last June — an important first step towards enhanced collaboration between the United Nations and the European Union.

The need for the rapid development of peacekeeping operations decided on by the Security Council, and their substantial evolution in recent years, has made the United Nations financial crisis even more glaring. The exponential increase in the peacekeeping budget has placed a growing burden on all United Nations Members, especially the top contributors. In the current budget year, for example, Italy is paying approximately $110 million to finance peacekeeping operations that the Security Council decided on in complete autonomy. We are thus in favour of a review of the scale of assessments for peacekeeping that will endow this fundamental sector with greater stability and resources and also compensate for the persistent state of financial uncertainty.

The tragic experiences of Sierra Leone, and, earlier, of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, have forced us to engage in a profound reflection on the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations decided on by the Security Council. In his report to the Millennium Assembly, the Secretary-General bravely faced up to the grave failures of United Nations missions, some of them recent, and underlined the need to increase the efficiency and legitimacy of the Council.

First of all, the Security Council must do more in the way of conflict prevention and adopt credible mandates, after having listened to all the interested countries, organizations and parties that can contribute to the resolution of crisis situations. In the future, we will be counting on an improvement in the Council's decision-making procedures, and a full accounting of them in the annual report we are discussing today.

There is a widespread feeling that non-members of the Council should also be consulted in its decision-making process. Our Organization's future success in restoring peace to some of the most tormented parts of the world will depend, to an increasing extent, on the ability of Council members to open up to outside contributions. The recommendations in the Brahimi report are particularly useful in this regard: we need to work so that active interaction with countries that contribute to peace operations takes place during the consideration of a new mandate and in cases where mandates have to be modified in response to events on the ground.

We need to reform the Council's working methods. Last year, there was an encouraging increase in open debates and public meetings.

I should like to say one other thing about the reform of the Security Council. The final Declaration of the Millennium Summit properly recommended comprehensive reform in all aspects, thus rejecting quick fixes or short-cuts on key issues such as the veto, the equality of Member States and effectiveness. That is why we do not see how an increase in the permanent membership would improve the decision-making process of the Security Council — quite the contrary, since the Security Council usually works at the level of the lowest common denominator among the permanent five members as a result of the power of the veto or the simple threat of the veto. That is the rule the Security Council follows. We are therefore puzzled by the criticism of the way in which the Working Group on reform works. There is minority rule and majority rule, but I think the need to reform the Security Council is too serious an issue for us to allow it to be dealt with in a way that promotes the interests of certain countries instead of the membership in general.

The credibility of our Organization in the maintenance of peace depends on its ability to adjust to new challenges and circumstances. While every Member State must strive to strengthen the crisis-management capacities of the United Nations in the field of peacekeeping and to reform its financial arrangements, the Security Council has special responsibilities. The most important of these responsibilities regards decision-making. This is a commitment that, pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter, is conferred upon the members of the Security Council by the general membership, which, in return, expects thorough, effective implementation.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to convey my delegation's congratulations to my brother and friend, Ambassador Martin Andjaba of Namibia. As President of the Security Council for October, he introduced with his usual clarity and precision the annual report of the Security Council covering the period 16 June 1999 to 15 June 2000.

It is true that the report is long, but it is full of facts and figures and provides a complete picture of the important role of the Security Council in managing the many situations that pose a threat to international peace and security in the world.

Member States have a legitimate interest in the activities of the Council and in the General Assembly debate on the report of the Council, as provided for in Article 15 and Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

This debate certainly provides a special opportunity to review the work of the Council and to consider ways of maintaining or enhancing the credibility and effectiveness of that central body in order to create the necessary synergy between it and the other principal organs of the Organization. We believe that this discussion of the report is useful for both the Security Council and the General Assembly because it helps to ensure perfect coordination and effective interaction.

It is clear from reading the report that once again the Council has had a particularly busy year. During the reporting period, it held 144 formal meetings, adopted 57 resolutions, issued 38 presidential statements and held 194 informal consultations of the whole.

I wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to all Council members for the high quality and relevance of the report, which offers us a timely assessment of their level of commitment to international peace and security.

The report is also the outcome of the efforts made by Council members and the Secretariat to fulfil the desire of countries members and non-members of the Council to make the work of that strategic body more transparent.

The need for greater transparency in the work of the Security Council has met with great progress in recent years, and we appreciate the now well-established practice of briefing non-members of the Council. I also wish to stress and welcome the more frequent use of open debates on items on the Council's agenda, as well as the positive initiatives taken by the Presidents to organize open meetings on specific questions of concern to the entire international community.

During this year, the Council has held thematic debates on peacekeeping, on security and post-conflict peace-building, on the promotion of peace and security, on humanitarian aid to refugees in Africa, on children affected by armed conflict, on the protection of civilians affected by armed conflicts, on small arms and light weapons, on the responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of peace, on the role of the Council in the prevention of armed conflicts, on the

humanitarian aspects of items before the Security Council, and, finally, on an equally important issue, the question of sanctions.

Clearly, these stimulating debates are of special importance for the non-members of the Council, because it means that they can make an important contribution to the consideration of the items on the Council's agenda. This is why my delegation supports this innovation, even as we remain convinced of the need to improve its practical effectiveness by holding more frequent open meetings on specific items, leading to concrete action.

Again this year, as in previous years, the report of the Security Council gives special attention to crises in Africa, the continent which currently has the greatest number of conflicts on the Council's agenda. I refer to Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia/Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and so forth. Given the unstable political situation in the continent, which is a source of concern for the entire international community, the Council has made commendable efforts to contain these conflicts. It can never be repeated too often that unless there is peace and stability, there can be no sustainable economic development in Africa.

In this regard, I wish to welcome the many initiatives on Africa undertaken by the Council during the reporting period and beyond. I wish to refer to the memorable days of 24 and 26 January 2000, and during which the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was considered, and during which, under the aegis of the United States presidency, the Security Council had a high-level debate in the presence of Presidents Chiluba of Zambia, Chissano of Mozambique, Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, dos Santos of Angola, Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Museveni of Uganda and Bizimungu of Rwanda, as well as the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Sir Ketumile Masire, the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue.

The taking of timely, courageous decisions validated the work of that meeting, in particular the reaffirmation of the commitments of the main protagonists of the Congolese crisis to work together for the strict implementation of the provisions of the Lusaka Agreement and for the immediate deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The international community as a whole welcomed that United States initiative and hoped that it would lead to new dynamism and thus a political solution to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is in this same context that we also welcomed the dispatch of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region to build on the outcome of the January meeting. It is true that that field mission did not bring about a major breakthrough in the Congolese crisis; however, it did help to enhance the Council's credibility by opening the way for the process of demilitarizing the city of Kisangani and making it safer. At that time, Kisangani was a hotbed of acts of violence that caused hundreds of civilian casualties.

Closer to us geographically, even if this event is not technically covered by the report, I wish to point out that the recent mission of a delegation of the Security Council to the subregion of West Africa is another illustration of this determination on the part of Council members to undertake specific actions in the field to restore peace and security in areas torn by conflict and civil war.

Finally, among the most outstanding activities of the Council during this year was the meeting held in parallel with the Millennium Summit where heads of State of countries members of the Council discussed primarily problems of security and peace in Africa.

In the interest of peace and development in the African continent, the Security Council should start considering ways to give Africans the capacity to strengthen their own capacity for peacekeeping, and particularly their capacity for prevention in order to deal with crisis situations. I have used the word "capacity" repeatedly because I wish to stress this need. All too often, the Council has been accused, rightly or wrongly, of reacting to African problems and of being slow to take proper preventive action. My delegation believes that a rapid reaction mechanism should be designed and put into place jointly by the Council and the regional organizations, on the basis of a partnership that would strike a balance between their respective roles and responsibilities.

African leaders, the Organization of African Unity and the subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of Central African States, have decided to include in their field of action the

prevention and security mechanisms to deal with the many African conflicts.

Another aspect of the work of the Council to be considered is the need to improve the working methods of that central body. In this regard, I am pleased to note that there is already broad consensus on such essential points as the participation of non-members in Council meetings, the programme of work of the Council and the briefings convened by the President of the Council for the benefit of non-members and troop-contributing countries. It now remains to go further and to institutionalize these trends so that from now on the promotion of international peace and security is based on a revitalized, more effective and more transparent Security Council.

We must finally end a deplorable trend that prevents the Council from fulfilling its mandate — that of Member States and regional organizations taking coercive action without the Council's authorization or acting unilaterally, invoking the right to humanitarian intervention. This trend should be discouraged by asserting the Council's competence in the areas defined by the Charter, so that the Security Council is in step with the changing world and so that it can demonstrate imagination and determination in the maintenance of global peace, security and stability.

Precisely since it functions solely in the service of peace, the Council — to enhance the authority and credibility with which it carries out its essential and fundamental mission of preserving global peace and security — needs the unequivocal support of its members and of the other members of the international community. In this regard, the valuable contribution that the Brahimi report could make to the Council's exercise of its mandate should be stressed. It seems to me that, were they to be adopted, some of the relevant recommendations contained in that report could considerably improve the work of the Council — for example, in the future management of peacekeeping operations.

In conclusion, I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to the representatives of Mauritius, Ireland, Norway, Colombia and Singapore, which have just been elected to the Security Council.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Ambassador Martin Andjaba of Namibia for introducing the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. We also thank the other members of the Security Council and the Secretariat for the work they did to prepare this large amount of material.

Without failing to recognize its value as part of the institutional memory of the Council, we reiterate that this kind of information is far from what we hope to receive and what we need. The annual report is not a privilege granted to the Member States represented in this Assembly; it is an obligation clearly established in Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. We have the legitimate right to expect a proper accounting from the body to which we have entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and which, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, acts on behalf of all the Member States.

In 1996 the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/193, with the precise objective of ensuring that the reports of the Security Council to the Assembly would provide a timely, substantive and analytic account of its work. However, most of the proposals contained in this resolution continue to be ignored. The Assembly should therefore undertake a consideration of the reasons for this non-compliance and take action to remedy the situation.

The General Assembly still does not receive the special reports that should be submitted by the Council, in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter. The presentation of such reports would in no way prejudice the work of the Council. On the contrary, it would be beneficial for all. It would enable the Assembly to make useful recommendations on the work of the Council and make possible active and continuous relations between the two bodies — something that is lacking at present.

Greater transparency in the work of the Council is urgently needed. In an increasingly interdependent world, decisions taken by that body have a growing effect, directly or indirectly, on all Member States. In addition, when those decisions are implemented, the financing comes from all the Member States and not solely from those States taking the decisions.

In the specific case of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, we must express appreciation for the constant efforts made by Argentina and Jamaica to keep the countries of the region as informed as possible on the work of the Council. But such efforts alone are not sufficient.

According to its own rules of procedure, the Council must meet in public unless it is decided otherwise. However, the rule has become the exception. The Council continues to carry out most of its work behind closed doors, despite the fact that the majority of Member States have emphatically and repeatedly stated that this is unacceptable. The Council's provisional rules of procedure are not even applied during these closed meetings.

We welcome the fact that, although such meetings remain the exception, over the past year there has been an increase in the number of open meetings of the Security Council. This trend should be maintained, but the objective is not merely to have an increase in quantity; open meetings should provide non-Member States a real opportunity to make an effective contribution to the work of that body. Too often we witness lengthy open debates in the Security Council that ultimately have no effect on the resolutions or presidential statements adopted, since the texts have been agreed on previously in closed meetings among the Council members.

So long as the current practice remains in place, the annual report of the Council must include detailed information on the discussions held behind closed doors. At present we are told only how long the meetings lasted. In general the monthly reports of the Council President offer little or no analysis. The presentation of these reports must become the rule, and we must establish parameters for the minimum information that must be contained in them.

We are concerned by the trend in the Security Council to discuss issues and adopt texts ruling on questions of a general nature — activities that far exceed the responsibilities entrusted to that body by the Charter. This approach is being used with increasing frequency by the Council in order to legitimize its actions in the economic, social and humanitarian spheres.

The Council must not assume tasks entrusted to the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies. Instead, its efforts should be focused on achieving greater coordination and cooperation between it and the Assembly and other bodies, as established by the Charter. As to the increasingly complex mandates adopted by the Council, there can be no excuse for its failure to adhere strictly to the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We welcome the inclusion in the Council's report, for the second consecutive year, of the reports of the sanctions Committees. At the same time, we reiterate that these Committees' working methods are affected by the same distortions evidenced in the Security Council's meetings and need to be reviewed. The meetings of sanctions Committees must, as a rule, be open and when they are held behind closed doors on an exceptional basis, detailed information on the deliberations must be provided in the Council's reports. The countries affected must have the full right to participate in the discussions of the sanctions Committees.

Sanctions regimes cannot become punitive instruments against some countries based on the hegemonic interests of certain Council members, as, unfortunately, now occurs in well-known cases. It is paradoxical that the very countries that are determined to preserve sanctions regimes which reflect their own national interests and affect innocent civilians are also among those that try to convince us of the value of so-called humanitarian intervention. This is a clear example of hypocrisy and double standards.

While the Council's annual report reflects the fact that most of the items on its agenda involve Africa, attention and available resources also remain focused on that continent. The undeniable truth is that Africa has more armed conflicts today than any other continent. More than one third of African countries are presently or have recently been involved in conflicts. It is clear that, beyond rhetoric, we need practical action and the necessary political will to find solutions to the growing and pressing problems of an entire continent, which are due primarily to their colonial past and to the current poverty, marginalization and underdevelopment in which African nations are mired.

We are convinced that many of the problems that we have addressed will be satisfactorily resolved only if there is complete reform of the Security Council, which is undoubtedly the most delicate and urgent task of United Nations reform as a whole. It should not, however, be cited as an excuse for maintaining the status quo while such reforms are being developed. As clear proof of the genuine will to move forward, we hope that the comments and suggestions that have been made and will continue to be made in this debate will

be taken duly into account by the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I thank Ambassador Martin Andjaba for his presentation of the Security Council report for the period June 1999 to June 2000. I take this opportunity also to congratulate the newly elected members of the Council: Colombia, Singapore, Ireland, Norway and Mauritius.

This annual debate should serve the purpose of discussing how decisions of the Council could be taken with broader communication with Member States. We support initiatives aimed at enhancing accountability and transparency in the work of the Security Council. Indeed, the work of the Security Council must be brought closer to the general membership. In this respect, we commend the holding of daily briefings by the presidency for their quality and level of detail. The increasing practice of open briefings, open debates and more frequent private meetings is also an encouraging sign. The sanctions Committee's reports could be debated in open meetings. We encourage outgoing Presidents to brief Member States on the work of the Security Council during their term and to circulate their assessments. Resolutions and presidential statements should be preceded by broader discussions and better reflect the general sense of open debates.

The report of the Security Council summarizes a year of intense activities, some success stories and, unfortunately, many reasons for concern. Africa remains the main focus of Council actions and discussions. The recurring violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the difficulties in implementing the peace process in Sierra Leone, the continuation of the civil war in Angola and the territorial dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea are powerful reminders that the United Nations still has a long way to go before our goal of a more stable international scenario can be achieved.

We are encouraged by the positive prospects in Angola, since the Government's forces are well able to contain the military challenge posed by UNITA in defiance of the Lusaka Protocol. We also welcome the fact that, since the United Nations Office in Angola became operational, there has been a noticeable improvement in the flow of humanitarian assistance.

The Middle East, especially after the events of recent weeks, is a source of grave concern. We welcome the adoption of resolution 1322 (2000) and stress the need for the Council to respond to possible outbreaks of violence in the region. Brazil also reaffirms that resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) must be the bases of a just and lasting solution to the Arab and Israeli conflict.

Also concerning the Middle East, the Council, although far from showing unity, was able to adopt a resolution on Iraq in the period covered by the report.

We hope to see peace and stability taking root in the Balkans. Despite recent positive developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Security Council's attention to the region is no less crucial than it was before. We reaffirm our support for the work of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo and our call for the local population to develop a culture of tolerance and multiculturalism. We note, however, that the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) was also a highly divisive issue for the Council.

The situation in East Timor is of close interest to Brazil. The leadership of the Secretary-General and the determined action of the Council during all stages of the crisis were essential to assert the message that the Timorese people's democratic option for self-determination could not be reversed by force. East Timor has to complete several transitions: from oppression to self-determination and independence; from economic backwardness to sustainable development; and from fear and terror to stability and tranquillity. The complex task of administering East Timor's transition to independence is being conducted with great competence by Under-Secretary-General Sergio Vieira de Mello and his team. Acts of violence and infiltration by militia groups in East Timor should not be allowed to disrupt the construction of the new State.

Peacekeeping operations are increasingly complex and numerous. The Security Council must be attentive to the current efforts to reflect on how to respond to new peacekeeping mandates. The Brahimi report offers a valuable framework on how to build upon lessons learned from mistakes of the past. The courageous reports on Rwanda and Srebrenica should be standing references. The challenge is, as the Brahimi report itself points out, the establishment of mandates that are clear, credible and achievable. Financial resources, mandate and political will must converge to make every United Nations peacekeeping initiative feasible.

Sanctions must be a tool for the normalization of international relations, not a collective punishment imposed on the population of a targeted country. Sanctions are an extreme measure that is justifiable only when alternatives for a peaceful settlement of the dispute have failed altogether. They should be proportional to the objectives and limited to precise targets, bear in mind the humanitarian impact and the effect on third parties, and contain clear terms of duration and termination. We praise the efforts of Ambassador Fowler in strengthening the implementation of the sanctions regime against UNITA. We are also looking forward to the results of the Security Council's working group on how to improve the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions established in April.

At the Millennium Summit, our leaders set the priorities for the agenda of the United Nations and the Security Council. Tolerance, democracy, development, human rights and humanitarian principles are at the core of what is to be achieved by the international community. The foundation of international law, upon which our quest for the Millennium Summit goals should be based, lies in the United Nations Charter. We reaffirm our view that the Security Council is the only body whose legitimacy to impose enforcement measures is based on a universally accepted instrument. The alternative to legitimacy provided by the United Nations Charter is an unstable order in which the goals established at the Millennium Summit will be more distant.

The leaders of the world called for intensified efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to make it more representative, effective and legitimate. The Council's present composition reflects events that occurred 55 years ago. The decision-making process in the Council must reflect the collective will of the international community as a whole. Otherwise, the Council will have a very modest role — if any at all — in our search for a durable solution to international crises.

Mr. Valdez Carrillo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Peruvian delegation wishes to thank Ambassador Martin Andjaba, Permanent Representative of Namibia and current President of the Security Council, for submitting the annual report of that body (A/55/2), covering the period from 16 June 1999 to 15 June 2000. We have received this report in accordance with Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, and we welcome the dialogue that can be established, through this debate, between two of the most important bodies of the system.

The maintenance of peace and security is one of the basic purposes of the Organization, reflected in Article 1 of the Charter, and it is also an ongoing desire and concern of nations. The Security Council is the body responsible for this duty, acting on behalf of the Members of the Organization. Members have a legitimate interest in the follow-up of achievements and progress, as well as problems and setbacks. That interest must be acknowledged and reciprocated.

Peru welcomes the efforts for openness made over the past year through the holding of more open meetings of the Council on various topics of interest, and hopes that this attitude will continue to prevail in the future so that the Security Council will become more transparent in its work and will consider the points of view of the majority of the States of this Organization.

Peru also welcomes the first steps to establish an ongoing, direct dialogue between the Security Council members and troop-contributing countries on the basic aspects of peacekeeping operations, such as the mandate, financial base and human resources of every mission. My delegation also considers that every member elected to that organ must make an ongoing effort to disseminate and update information to its respective region, as the delegation of Argentina does through weekly meetings at its Mission and the delegation of Jamaica does at the meetings of the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

Recent years, and specifically the period corresponding to this report, have posed enormous challenges in terms of planning and implementation by the Organization because of the size and importance of deployed peacekeeping operations. These new realities have arisen from internal conflicts whose destabilizing force involves or spreads to neighbouring countries, necessarily leading to an adjustment of traditional peacekeeping operation duties. This situation has produced the emergence of new concepts and the expansion of traditional functions in mandates, stemming from deliberations and decisions that leave the great majority of the States of the Organization outside the debate on the best way to face these new realities.

Moreover, we have recently witnessed discussions within the Security Council on aspects that fall within the jurisdiction of other forums of the Organization, such as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. It has thus become more common to restrict to a small group of countries the debate on concepts that, without an appropriate framework, can lead to intervention and interference in the internal affairs of States. For example, there is no clear basis of action and interpretation for so-called humanitarian intervention, which would justify the use of force due to serious violations of humanitarian law and human rights. Questions arise about who will determine when these violations occur, and by what standards and why this discussion does not take place within a more participatory forum.

We cannot ignore that the mandate conferred by the Charter on the Security Council responded to a reality in which relations between States prevailed in the international arena. Therefore, the Charter alludes to those relations when it deals with measures to prevent threats to peace and security.

Peru has also carefully followed the debates in the Security Council on the prevention of armed conflict. Positions have been expressed in these meetings promoting a broad, unilateral expansion of the concept of the causes of conflicts and of the very concept of security, incorporating factors of a political nature and of government management.

Peru favours preventive action that deals with the main causes of conflicts, particularly well-known economic factors such as poverty and underdevelopment. However, it believes that this subject must be framed within the principles and norms of the Charter of the Organization and must result from ongoing dialogue with the competent bodies of the system, such as the Economic and Social Council.

That body has a basic role to play in efforts to prevent conflicts. It understands that items on poverty and development are of high priority within the framework of the United Nations — the "promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples", as is mentioned in the Charter. These priorities have been postponed despite having the majority support of Member countries and being in keeping with the preventive effort promoted by the Security Council.

We also believe that it could be difficult for the Security Council, in fulfilling the responsibilities assigned to it under the Charter, to achieve the desired results unless there is also a process allowing for the strengthening of the General Assembly.

Peru is convinced that it is essential to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the General Assembly, the most representative and democratic body of the international system, in order for it to regain a decisive role in managing and deciding on those matters over which it has legitimate and direct jurisdiction. These include issues related to international peace and security, as stipulated in Article 11 of the Charter. This function must be performed in order to determine the frameworks of collective security, which, as I have mentioned, is faced with situations of internal conflict, for which the Security Council was not designed, especially in those cases in which consequences and decisions of universal application may arise.

We believe that the General Assembly is not only capable of consideration, reflection and recommendations in these matters, but that the need for the fulfilment of this role is more evident than ever before. There is no better place than this to negotiate, express and agree consensually on new concepts that will be applied later by the Security Council.

This forum also contributes to the safeguarding of the basic principles of relations between States and the establishment of a common basis for action that derives from the participation of all States. We reaffirm that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations is the relevant forum within the Organization to deal with all matters relating to such operations.

Peru received with interest the statement of the Security Council during the Millennium Summit. We believe that most aspects dealt with therein form a basis for a general consensus among States. We emphasize, among other things, the reaffirmation of the purposes and principles of the Charter, the search for greater effectiveness in peacekeeping operations, the strengthening of the security of the Organization's personnel in the field, the expansion of consultations with the troop-contributing countries and the importance of reintegrating former combatants into society.

These same aspects have been particularly emphasized in the report of the Panel of experts, presided over by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, which has led to an intense debate in various forums of the

Organization and on which Peru will submit its opinion in the relevant bodies.

However, we believe that the Security Council statement lacked specific reference to studying sanctions regimes, as was mentioned by some Security Council delegations during its debate. The purpose of such reviews will be to ensure that sanctions do not have their greatest impact — in some cases, permanently — on a civilian population that ends up being the direct victim of the sanctions imposed on a particular Government.

On the other hand, Peru is pleased with efforts to analyse the economic causes of conflicts, in connection with the role played by rebel groups and third States in their illegal exploitation of natural resources. We believe that this is a very important factor in sustaining current conflicts, and it must be addressed. For its part, the Peruvian delegation has informed the appropriate national authorities of the specific provisions of the Security Council pertaining to this situation.

My delegation has followed, and will continue to follow attentively, all these matters regarding the Security Council. We are convinced of the fundamental role assigned to the Council by the Charter of the Organization. That is why we would like for it to achieve its full potential, for we acknowledge that the success of its efforts means the success of the Organization and, consequently, the achievement of the desire for peace and security of all our peoples.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank our colleague Ambassador Andjaba, the Permanent Representative of Namibia and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for his presentation of the report of the Security Council for the period June 1999 to June 2000. It is also my pleasure to congratulate Singapore, Mauritius, Colombia, Norway and Ireland on their election to the Council for 2001 and 2002.

Our delegation has examined the document containing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. We pay tribute to the effort that has gone into preparing the report, and we would like to reaffirm the importance of the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. Bahrain spared no effort to play an effective role during its membership in the Security Council, from January 1998 to December 1999 — a period that witnessed many raging conflicts, from Africa to Europe to Asia. My country was able to witness at first-hand the importance of the role entrusted to the Security Council in ensuring stability in the world. However, we were likewise able to see at first-hand that there were many obstacles standing in the way of the Council's achieving its purpose that is organically linked to the maintenance of international peace and security. It may be appropriate here to touch upon some of those obstacles.

First, given the political map of the international community, there is the question of the inequitable representation in the membership of the Security Council. It goes without saying that this map is different today from what it was at the time the Charter was established, in 1945. This is true whether one looks at numbers, geographical distribution or the balance of political power. Some say that increasing the number of members in the Council in the interest of equity might affect the efficiency of the Council's work. While that might be true to a certain extent, it is not sufficient reason to justify having 15 members of the Council represent 189 Member States of the United Nations.

Secondly, there is the issue of the lack of transparency in the work of the Council, in particular where the concept of collective security is concerned. That concept presupposes the participation of the largest possible number of members of the international community, including members of the Council itself. It is true that there has been greater access in recent years by other members of the United Nations to the work of the Council. But there has not been enough openness to enable non-member States of the Council to participate effectively. This applies especially to members of the Organization whose countries are facing the same problems as those being discussed by the Council.

Thirdly, there is a difference in the ways that the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council deal with various issues. We are not here to discuss the issue of veto power; but perhaps the right of veto and the fact that one group has permanent membership status and the other does not, serve to engender within the Council two different views and two methods of work on the same issue.

Fourthly, there is the issue of the crisis faced by peacekeeping operations — which are entrusted to the Council — whether with regard to logistical, financial

or organizational aspects of those operations. Despite the fact that each peacekeeping operation has its own particularities, there is apparently no clear organizational methodology or planning in place for those operations. As a result, decisions on resolutions to deploy United Nations peacekeepers stem from considerations reflecting the views and analyses of certain members of the Council, in particular those of the most influential members.

Fifthly, the sanctions regimes established by the Charter of the Organization, whose imposition and implementation have been entrusted to the Council, have negative consequences when they are imposed for a long period of time and turn the acute suffering of peoples into chronic suffering. There is a need for a standardized system that would mitigate negative effects on populations as months and years go by. Moreover, we believe that the imposition of sanctions should not be comprehensive; rather, sanctions should be confined to specific areas. To give one example, sanctions should not prevent people from fulfilling religious obligations that may require travel outside their countries, simply because the sanctions prohibit travel outside the country under sanctions. This matter requires radical review, in accordance with the guidelines established by the non-permanent members of the Council in 1999, which can serve as a basis for such a review.

I would like to say a few final words about the Middle East situation and where that question stands in the Council. The Middle East problem is closely linked to international peace and security and has resulted in more than one war. Although the problem has been on the international scene since 1948, it is not on the agenda of the Council. The recent tragic events in the region, which have led to over 100 Palestinian deaths as a result of an Israeli act of provocation, should make us realize the importance of this question. It is high time for the Security Council once again to take up this issue that was the subject of much discussion by the Council in the past and led to the adoption of a number of resolutions. Of particular importance are resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), whose implementation has been pending for quite some time.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): The delegation of Viet Nam wishes to thank His Excellency Ambassador Martin Andjaba, Permanent Representative of Namibia and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for his succinct and informative presentation of the report of the Security Council (A/55/2). His statement surely helped us to understand more fully the contents of the comprehensive report, which is rich in factual material, as well as the work of the Council during the period under review. I wish to congratulate the Security Council secretariat on the hard work that went into the production of the report.

The Millennium Summit showed that the general membership of the United Nations has the intense aspiration to enhance the authority of the General Assembly, the organ in which every Member is represented. The Millennium Declaration also underlined the importance of the task of further strengthening the relationship between this body and the Security Council. In that context, the Assembly's consideration of the report of the Security Council today is of special significance. We hope that what we do today will contribute to improving the work of the Council and will thus make a worthy contribution to the maintenance of world peace and security in the coming years.

We have carefully studied the report and wish to underline the positive developments in the work of the Council in the period from 16 June 1999 to 15 June 2000. It is quite noticeable that there has been greater transparency in the meetings conducted by the Council during that period. The general membership has long been very energetic in calling for greater transparency in the conduct of the business of that body. We have seen a greater number of public meetings and prompt briefings by Presidents of the Council to representatives of States not members of the Council. It is noteworthy that in recent years, non-members of the Security Council have been increasingly engaged in the discussions of important issues before the Council. There is no doubt that such participation is essential for the success of the Council's activities. It is a welcome development.

We welcome the prompt actions of the Security Council during the period in resolving crises in many regions throughout the world. In that regard, we wish the Security Council would apply the same approach to the current Middle East crisis. We earnestly hope that a solution will be found to the crisis and that the peace process will be put back on track.

We also welcome the fact that the parties concerned in given issues have been invited to take

part in some of the consultations of the Council. Their participation has helped the Council to produce more balanced and impartial solutions to the issues under discussion. They have brought greater, valuable inputs into the work of the Council.

Reading the report and following the work of the Council, we recognize that the Council has made great efforts to conduct a larger number of public meetings consisting of thematic debates. These debates have focused on many issues that relate to the maintenance of world peace and security, such as the protection of civilians in armed conflict; protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees; children and armed conflict; and others. This initiative has received an earnest response from States not members of the Council. We hope that this procedure will continue, because it is our conviction that it will help the Council to better equip itself to deal with crises when they occur in the future.

In that regard, we wish to caution members that the question of so-called humanitarian intervention raises many delicate and controversial questions. These include a fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter, namely State sovereignty. We hold that the Security Council should not attempt to expand its purview beyond what is authorized under the Charter, because that would in time diminish the roles of other competent organs of the United Nations; here, the General Assembly is a case in point. The general membership of the United Nations, for instance, will not accept the Council indulging in efforts to establish certain norms.

We wish to take this opportunity to stress that the Security Council should do its utmost to avoid private meetings. It is our view that private meetings should be the exception rather than the norm, as they are now. The world community today cannot accept the practice by which the Council holds formal meetings only to conduct thematic debates or to inform the general membership of the work it has done in secret.

As regards the decision-making mechanism of the Council, my delegation is particularly concerned at the fact that, although the veto power was not used during period under review, some Council members still resort to the threat of using it, thus making the work of the Council less effective. Because of this practice, many meetings and consultations of the Council are prolonged into the wee hours, and awaited solutions have not been forthcoming. The Council's impasse in reviewing ongoing sanctions regimes is a good case in point.

My delegation calls on the Council urgently to review the sanctions regimes that are under the authority of the Council. Viet Nam believes that sanctions should be the last resort, that their scope and duration should be clearly defined and that great caution should be exercised before they are imposed. Most important of all, they should never be used indefinitely. In this connection, we call on Council members to urgently review and lift all the sanctions imposed upon Iraq, taking into account their debilitating effects on the Iraqi people.

We note with pleasure the continued practice of including in the report monthly assessments by former Presidents of the Council. With these voluntary assessments, the report of the Security Council is more analytical and insightful. It helps non-member States to have a better and deeper understanding of the work of the Council. We also commend the fact that the report includes information about the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies, particularly the sanctions committees. We hope that this good example will be continued in future reports of the Council.

In a nutshell: on the one hand, due recognition should be given for improvements in the working procedures and the business of the Council. On the other hand, we are sorry to note that the Council, more often than not, has not proved to be the useful tool of all States Members of the United Nations. Some members of the Council, particularly certain permanent members, still act only on their own behalf rather than on behalf of the general membership as is stipulated in the Charter. It is high time that this was corrected, unless we want the Council to be irrelevant to current world realities.

Viet Nam has on various occasions called for an expanded and reformed Council. We strongly believe that urgent efforts should be exerted to make the Council truly representative and accountable and its work truly democratic and legitimate. We have also expressed our support for the curtailment of the veto power, as an interim measure.

Before concluding my statement, I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to Colombia, Ireland, Mauritius, Norway and Singapore on their election to membership of the Council last week. We strongly

believe that those countries will make worthy contributions to the work of the Council.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation is grateful to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Martin Andjaba of Namibia, for his precise, objective and factual presentation of the Council's fifty-fifth annual report to the General Assembly. The consideration of this report, pursuant to Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, affords the Assembly an opportunity to examine all aspects of the work of the Council — substantive as well as procedural — and to make constructive critiques and recommendations for further improvements in the work of the Council. It also provides for more effective coordination and interaction between the Assembly and the Council.

My delegation is gratified at the ongoing efforts to improve the format and content of the annual report of the Council. In its current format, the report now contains a fuller and much more accurate record of the Council's activities, beyond a mere compilation of already published documents, as was the case in the past. The inclusion in the report of brief descriptions of the Council's informal consultations of the whole, information on the work of the Council's various subsidiary bodies, and assessments by the Presidents of the Council has made the report more substantive and, hopefully, more useful to the larger membership of the Organization. A particularly welcome development is the trend towards a more in-depth reporting on the work of the Council by its Presidents, which is a departure from past practice. This trend towards greater transparency in the work of the Council, which was initiated largely by the elected members of the Council, will, hopefully, become a permanent feature in the working methods of the Council.

However, further improvements may be necessary in order to make future reports of the Council more comprehensive and useful to the general membership. General Assembly resolution 51/193 of 1996 contains a number of important and constructive recommendations for such improvements. At the same time, discussions in the Assembly and in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform have also addressed this matter and have made constructive suggestions. One of these recommendations was the need for submission of special reports of the Council, as provided for under Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. We believe that the submission to the Assembly, when necessary, of such special reports highlighting major critical issues before the Council, will contribute to even closer interaction and coordination between the two principal organs of this Organization. There have been situations in the recent past in which the submission of such special reports would have been extremely valuable to States Members of the United Nations.

It is also gratifying to note that the working methods of the Council represent an ongoing process that continues to evolve. This is largely due to the ever-increasing calls from the general membership of the United Nations, as well as from within the Council itself, for more openness, enhanced transparency and, most important of all, increased effectiveness of the Council. Wide-ranging and constructive discussions are continuing, with the objective of finding ways and means of enabling the Council to more effectively carry out its primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the general membership of the Organization.

A number of practical improvements to the Council's procedures have indeed been effected and have been welcomed by the larger membership. These include, the regular briefings given by the President of the Council, among others, to non-member States on issues discussed during the informal consultations of the Council, as well as the increased frequency of open debates and open briefings, with the participation of interested Member States that are not members of the Council. It is to be hoped that these briefing sessions will be fully utilized by the larger membership.

The convening of the so-called thematic debates in the Council has become a useful forum for more effective and broader consultations between Council members and interested Member States not members of the Council, as well as relevant intergovernmental organizations and experts from the Secretariat and United Nations specialized agencies and other international bodies. These thematic debates provide an opportunity for the participants to address complex and cross-cutting issues relating to the overall question of peace and security. They contribute to enriching the Council's understanding of complex peace and security issues and to improving its decision-making process.

While the Council's informal consultations have their purpose and are, in many ways, indispensable, transparency demands that there should be more

frequent public or formal meetings of the Council. It is gratifying to note that during the period covered by the report, we have seen an increase in the number of such meetings of the Council. Also, increasingly, the Council now receives briefings from the Secretariat or the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in respect of existing United Nations peacekeeping operations in the format of the open meetings to which the larger membership of the Organization is invited. The Council has also resorted to the more frequent convening of so-called private formal meetings, with the participation of concerned or directly affected States, and at times with others that have special interests in such private meetings. Such private meetings allow for candid exchanges of views between Council members and representatives of concerned States that may not be possible in an open setting. In this sense, the so-called private meetings of the Council do serve a purpose.

With the more frequent use of the format of private meetings of the Council, the mechanism of the Arria formula has reverted to what it was originally intended to be, namely a mechanism for informal exchanges of views between Council members and individuals representing non-governmental organizations or institutions that could contribute to a better understanding by Council members of particular issues under that body's consideration. We are pleased with the more frequent use of private meetings of the Council, as provided for under its rules of procedure, as well as with the proper use of the Arria formula.

Even as the Council's working procedures continue to evolve, there should be more focused attention in addressing the most contentious aspect of the Council's decision-making process, that is, the anachronistic institution of the veto. Experience has shown, as recently as late last week, that the Council's ability to deal with pressing international crises promptly and effectively is affected by the veto or the threat of use of the veto. Pending its ultimate demise, there is a need to regulate and restrict the use of the veto to ensure a more democratic functioning of the Security Council. We urge those members of the Council with veto power to manifest the necessary political will in this regard. We are pleased with the great restraint shown by the majority of the permanent members with respect to the use or threat of use of the veto.

My delegation welcomes the more frequent dispatch of Council missions to conflict situations, such as those that were sent to East Timor, Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and, more recently, to Sierra Leone. Even though these missions may not result in major breakthroughs in the resolution of the conflict, they afford Council members a better understanding of the real situation on the ground and a better appreciation of the nature, complexity and dynamics of the conflict. The deeper insights that such missions bring to bear in Council discussions of specific conflict situations can only result in enhancing the decision-making process in the Council. The missions sent to Africa, namely to the Great Lakes region, to Ethiopia and Eritrea and to Sierra Leone, are particularly important to the Council given its preoccupation with the conflict situations on the continent. They will result in more informed and focused discussions on the conflicts and on the role of the Council in resolving them.

Clearly, the success of any Council action in addressing conflict situations around the globe is determined by many factors, including the cooperation and political will of the parties concerned to achieve peace. But the effectiveness and credibility of the Council in carrying out its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security largely depend on determined efforts — prompt, united and concrete action — by the Council itself. Clearly, this will require political will on the part of Council members, which, if not forthcoming, will result in paralysis in the Council, thereby blocking any concrete action by the Council. Needless to say, this will undermine they very credibility of the Council in the eyes of the international community.

The lack of political will on the part of the Council can inadvertently result in a selective approach in addressing conflict situations. This should be avoided. The Council must deal with conflict situations in an even-handed manner, irrespective of where the crisis occurs. A non-selective approach by the Council is vital to ensure its credibility and prestige, as well as the necessary support for its actions.

Sanctions remain a legitimate instrument of the Council in giving effect to its decisions with regard to certain States or parties to a conflict. While recognizing that this enforcement mechanism is provided for in Article 41 of the Charter, my delegation strongly believes that sanctions are an exceptional

measure that should be resorted to only in extreme situations, after all peaceful means of influencing the behaviour of the States, Governments or other authorities concerned have been exhausted. Sanctions should be imposed only after careful consideration of their objectives and should be properly targeted, with specified time-frames, with clear provisions for their lifting and in full cognisance of their possible impact on third States.

Upon the imposition of sanctions, the Council should establish a clear mechanism for an assessment of the impact of the sanctions. The Council should avoid imposing blanket or comprehensive sanctions on an entire country because of the likely debilitating effects that that would have on the populace. Sanctions should be lifted as soon as possible once they have served their purpose or are no longer pertinent to the situation. My delegation is encouraged by the current efforts in the Council to address, in a comprehensive manner, all issues pertaining to sanctions, and to move in the direction of more focused and targeted sanctions.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to warmly congratulate the newly elected non-permanent members of the Council, namely, Colombia, Ireland, Mauritius, Norway and Singapore. Malaysia pledges its full support and cooperation to them as they prepare to take their seats on the Council in January next year. We trust they will build on the achievements made thus far and forge new breakthroughs in enhancing further the transparency and effectiveness of the Council during their tenure. We are confident that they will do so. We wish them every success.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the five countries — Colombia, Ireland, Mauritius, Norway and Singapore — that were elected to non-permanent membership of the Council last week. The palpable excitement which filled this Hall on election day was testimony to the importance Member States attach to the Council's work. I wish to convey to the newly elected members, and to all the members of the Security Council, assurances of Japan's full support as they discharge their enormous responsibilities.

I also wish to express my appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Mr. Martin Andjaba, Ambassador of Namibia, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council on its work from June 1999 to June 2000. This is indeed a useful document, and I very much appreciate the enhanced monthly assessments made by the former Presidents, particularly the detailed assessments of the work of the Council made by the non-permanent members during their tenures.

It has become increasingly apparent in recent years that the maintenance of international peace and security requires a comprehensive approach, one that addresses not only political and military but also economic and social dimensions, which are the root causes of conflicts. The open debate chaired by United States Vice-President Al Gore last January on the devastating impact of AIDS in Africa is perhaps the most telling example of the Council's wider approach to peace and security issues.

The need to expand the perspective from which we consider international peace and security is also evident in the recent multifaceted mandates of peacekeeping operations, which, in addition to military and police activities, often extend to nation-building and include activities in the area of development and governance. The doubling of the total budget of peacekeeping operations in the past two years is also a reflection of that need. Against this background, the cooperation of the entire international community in the maintenance of peace and security is becoming ever-more essential. It is largely through the support and cooperation of non-member States, which provide personnel as well as financial resources for peacekeeping and peacemaking activities, that the decisions of the Security Council are implemented. Our experiences in East Timor, Kosovo and Sierra Leone are cases in point.

I heartily support the recent increase in the number of so-called open debates and open briefings. The need to engage interested non-members in the Council's deliberations and to have their views reflected in the Council's decisions has been repeatedly stressed in the course of the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. However, I must point out that non-members are not given the opportunity to express their views at open briefings. Moreover, the considerations underlying the Council's decisions on peacekeeping operations are not always clear to non-members. I would therefore like to suggest that every effort be made to hold open debates rather than open briefings, so that non-member

countries are given the opportunity to ask questions and to make their views known.

I also welcome the Council's recent practice of holding informal consultations with the participation of troop contributors. But that is not enough. I would like to bring to the attention of the Assembly the statement by the President of the Security Council of 28 March 1996 and note by the President of the Security Council of 30 October 1998, contained in documents S/PRST/1996/13 and S/1998/1016 respectively, which point out that the Council should continue the existing practice of inviting Member States which make special contributions to peacekeeping operations other than troops and civilian police, such as contributions to trust funds, logistics and equipment.

I have to point out that this practice has not been followed. The exclusion from those consultations of countries making such contributions runs counter to the trend towards greater transparency and accountability.

While we support the steps the Security Council has taken to improve its interaction with the rest of the United Nations membership, these measures will not in themselves enhance the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness. In order to make the Council truly effective in tackling the increasingly complex challenges it faces, its composition must be fundamentally reformed to reflect the realities of today's international community. Let me, therefore, stress again my conviction, which I believe is shared by a majority of countries, that both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council must be expanded, and that both developing and developed countries must be included in the expanded permanent membership.

The fact that more than 150 countries stressed the need to reform the Security Council in the course of the Millennium Summit and in the subsequent general debate is a reflection of the growing frustration among the United Nations membership over the slow progress that has been made in that regard. Indeed, as stated in the Millennium Summit Declaration, we should intensify our efforts to realize genuine reform to ensure that the Security Council can effectively carry out its crucially important work in the years to come.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Consideration of the Security Council's annual report is one of the main activities of the General Assembly. We would like to thank the Ambassador of Namibia, for his excellent introduction.

Undoubtedly, the Security Council is the Organization's most visible body in the international public's eye, given the emergency situations in which it is called upon to play a leading role. However, we must not forget that the decisions of the Security Council are not exclusively the decisions of its members, but rather those of the international community as a whole. Ultimately, the Council is acting on behalf of all Members of this Organization. For this reason, it is possible to say today that both the Security Council as a whole and each of its members are presenting accounts to those whom they represent.

At the same time, the other Members of the Organization have an obligation to consider the work of the Council conscientiously in order to determine if the Council is effectively complying with its responsibilities and faithfully representing our interests.

Unfortunately, events over the past year have not provided a very positive image of the Security Council's work. In Sierra Leone hundreds of United Nations peacekeepers were taken hostage. In Timor the Organization's personnel fell victim to cold-blooded murder. In the Congo, cities have been bombed and innumerable massacres have taken place, while in the Horn of Africa we have witnessed an incomprehensible war, despite the last-minute personal diplomatic efforts of a number of Security Council members.

The responsibility for these setbacks seems to be clear. As revealed in the Brahimi report:

> "Most occurred because the Security Council and the Member States crafted and supported ambiguous, inconsistent and under-funded mandates and then stood back and watched as they failed." *(A/55/305, para. 266)*

If we are to trust this report, we must conclude that the Council has repeatedly failed in its work.

Nevertheless, my country recognizes that coordinated action by the international community, through this Organization, is the sole mechanism that humanity can rely on to face the perils that lie in ambush. For that reason, we cannot lose faith in the Security Council; rather, we must strengthen it.

We know that in some circles it has been suggested that humanitarian intervention by a group of States particularly interested in a given crisis might be a valid substitute for the work of the Council. My delegation does not share this thesis. Unilateral humanitarian intervention can easily become an excuse for ignoring the prohibition of the use of force. The doctrine of a just war ultimately is reduced to legitimizing war, destruction and death through weak theological arguments.

We believe that banning the use of force is the cornerstone for the society of nations, and it must continue to be that. On this prohibition is based the trust of the majority of the States which deem this Organization the main guarantor for their security, and on it is based every effort to achieve disarmament, as well as all supporting initiatives to resolve disputes peacefully. We fear that if this ban is weakened, the door to violence in international relations will be opened.

Under the legal regime established by the Charter, the Security Council is the only legitimate mechanism available to the international community as a whole for responding to armed conflicts or humanitarian crises of such a serious nature that, in and of themselves, they become threats to peace. With the very limited exception of the right to legitimate self-defence, prior authorization by the Security Council is essential for any initiative that could require the use of force or that attempts to dominate the States involved in conflict.

In this context, it is essential that we develop a new strategy and doctrine for the establishment and conduct of peacekeeping operations, in light of the experience gained over the past decade. The Brahimi report is but one step forward in this direction, and we believe that we need an in-depth and transparent discussion within the General Assembly on the recommendations and views expressed in that report.

The impartiality of the peacekeeping forces, the consent of parties in conflict and the limiting of the use of force to legitimate defence must continue to be the basic principles of the political-military doctrine of peacekeeping operations. Any departure from these principles, if such is really deemed essential, ought to be dealt with through the greatest caution and forethought.

Over the past year, we have seen the establishment and growth of a new kind of peacekeeping operation: the transitional civil administrations in Kosovo and East Timor. This kind of operation presents an unprecedented challenge for the Organization, creating obligations and expectations never contemplated in the past. The United Nations, on its own, is expected to provide basic services in health, education, public administration, justice, security, postal service and tax collection; and it is also to promote economic reconstruction and the establishment of democracy in an area of transition. Despite the intrinsic difficulties in a task of this magnitude, the experiences in Kosovo and East Timor have, in general, been positive. They provide us with examples of the capacity of this institution to act when there is the political will to respond effectively to the requirements of the situation on the ground. We feel that this experience should serve as a model for future actions.

Over the past year we have also seen some positive developments in Security Council practices. These developments should be encouraged.

First, we welcome the sending of observer missions made up of Permanent Representatives of Member States. We believe that such missions allow members of the Council to familiarize themselves at first hand with the requirements of the situation they must address. At the same time, the missions allow members to send a clear message to the parties. However, we believe that the scope of these missions should not be exaggerated. In this regard, it would be well to assess the true results of the Security Council missions in April and May of this year to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kosovo, and Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Secondly, we welcome the candour, courage and enthusiasm of the group of experts charged with considering sanctions against UNITA. We also admire the honesty, independence and the bravery of the Independent Inquiry into the actions of the United Nations during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. We believe that such investigations are an essential aspect of the work of the Organization and that their high standards should become the norm for Security Council activities.

Thirdly, we appreciate the changes in the approach to imposing sanctions regimes. In particular we welcome the fact that the bans imposed against the parties in the Horn of Africa under resolution 1298

(2000) were imposed for a limited period of time, without the possibility of automatic extension. Any extension of these measures would require a subsequent official decision of the Security Council. My delegation has for several years advocated such time limits on sanctions regimes. We hope that this precedent will be followed in future cases.

In order to realize its purposes and principles the United Nations needs the firm and constant support of all Member States. It is therefore essential to provide this Organization with sufficient financial, operational and logistical resources — resources that are proportionate to the tasks entrusted to it. In this regard we need to reassess the possibility of establishing permanent reserves of military, civilian and political experts who are available at a moment's notice, as well as reserves of materiel for missions. At the same time, troop-contributing countries should provide duly trained and equipped personnel. We need to give peacekeeping missions clear mandates in order to avoid conflicts regarding the control of these missions, and we also need to establish uniform procedures and operational norms for the conduct of these missions. In short, we must see peacekeeping missions as one of the normal and ongoing activities of the Organization and not as exceptional undertakings.

We are aware that it is expensive to maintain international peace and security effectively. Most of the proposals we are endorsing require additional financial resources. If Member States are truly committed to the maintenance of peace, greater efforts must be made to resolve the financial crisis afflicting the Organization. My delegation believes that those States that contribute to endangering international peace and security — that is, those countries that are the main producers of weapons or that have disproportionately large military budgets — should contribute more to the budget for peacekeeping operations than those nations whose military budgets are relatively small in relation to their gross national products.

In addition, we must note that armed conflicts and humanitarian crises are closely related phenomena. The causes of conflicts can be found in poverty, social injustice, the systematic disregard of human rights and the lack of democratic mechanisms for resolving political, ideological and social conflicts.

Promoting international peace and security involves more than setting up peacekeeping missions or calling for negotiations. The work of the Security Council is limited to dealing with specific events when all the previous safeguards for peaceful coexistence have failed. However, defending peace requires preventive efforts before conflicts occur and peace-building efforts at the end of conflicts. Promoting peace requires an ongoing and sustained effort to create an atmosphere in which there is mutual respect and violence is rejected. True and sustainable peace can only be achieved when decent living conditions are guaranteed for all inhabitants, when there is a sufficient level of economic development to meet all the basic needs, when fundamental rights are respected and when disputes are resolved by democratic means.

My delegation believes that, in accordance with the distribution of tasks laid down in the Charter, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are the appropriate bodies for the implementation and coordination of such sustained efforts to prevent conflicts and to build peace. In this context, invests in development, education, health, human rights and democracy are direct investments in future peace — and, therefore, work of that kind is as important as the activities of the Security Council.

In assessing the work of the Security Council over the past year, we must also reflect on the activities of each of our States and on the contributions that have been made to the Organization during this same period. Have we supported the United Nations in deeds as we have supported it in words? Have we furnished the necessary human and material resources so that the Organization can do its work? Have we provided the necessary political support? In short, the successes of the Security Council are the successes of the entire international community, just as the failures of the Council are the failure of us all.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): At the outset, please allow me to thank the President of the Security Council for the month of October, Ambassador Martin Andjaba, for the excellent presentation he made today of the annual report of the Security Council for the period 16 June 1999 to 15 June 2000. I would also like to thank the Security Council secretariat for the excellent work it did in producing the voluminous report that we have before us today.

Also before I begin, I would like to thank all the countries that have congratulated the five new members of the Security Council elected this year,

including Singapore. We realize that we have a big job to do, and we will try to do it to the best of our abilities.

In his seminal Millennium Assembly report entitled "We the peoples", Secretary-General Kofi Annan drew a vivid analogy of our world as a global village. If we use this analogy of the global village, we can see the Security Council's role as akin to that of a magistracy that has been entrusted and authorized by the village to keep the peace. But this magistracy has a two-tier structure. It comprises first a small group of five villagers, who, by virtue mainly of an historical fait accompli, have been given security of tenure and other privileges.

The second group consists of a bigger, but significantly less influential group of 10 members of the community, chosen by the village to serve for a limited duration based on their ability to advance the cause of peace in the village. In exchange for the magistracy's agreeing to undertake primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security in the global village on behalf of the community, this magistracy is granted wide-ranging powers. The village community has, in turn, agreed to be bound by decisions of the magistracy.

Surprisingly, the magistracy has few obligations in return to the village community. One of these, of course, is to submit an annual written report that contains information on the work undertaken by the magistracy. Article 15 (1) of the Charter states:

> "The General Assembly shall receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council; these reports shall include an account of the measures that the Security Council has decided upon or taken to maintain international peace and security."

That is why we are here today. These annual reports, it would seem, are the only institutional avenue through which the global village community can inform itself of the activities of the magistracy. Each year, at an annual gathering of the village community, several members take the floor to express their views on the annual report and the magistracy. Some are even critical. However, there is little evidence so far that these discussions have had any significant impact on the magistracy, which remains very much an instrument of the most powerful magistrates. As John Foster Dulles wrote in a somewhat prescient fashion in 1950:

> "The Security Council is not a body that merely enforces agreed law. It is a law unto itself . ... No principles of law are laid down to guide it; it can decide in accordance with what it thinks is expedient." (*War or Peace*, Macmillan, NY, 1950)

The key question that we therefore have to address under this agenda item is whether this state of affairs is satisfactory. At the Millennium Assembly gathering of our global village, should we merely comment on and criticize this annual report, or should we do more? Should we, for example, ask the magistracy to account for its failures to perform its role in maintaining peace and security? Should we also seek from the magistracy a clarification for its non-action on issues relating to peace and security, particularly when such non-action is tantamount to a dereliction of its primary responsibility? This is no abstract question for small States. Small States, which depend on the Security Council for their security, will find their lives seriously imperilled if the Council fails to fulfil its obligations under the Charter.

The bottom-line issue is accountability. I do not think that many will challenge the merits of rendering the Security Council accountable for its action and non-action, including those members holding positions of special privilege in the Council. There is, after all, ample proof that accountability and its sister principle, transparency, are now widely regarded as integral parts of good governance.

The consideration of agenda item 11 today has assumed added significance against the backdrop of the reports on the fall of Srebrenica and the Rwanda genocide of 1994 and ongoing consultations on the implementation of the recommendations of the Brahimi Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. I would, in fact, commend to all a careful study of these reports. They tell a sobering story of gross ineptitude, the primacy of narrow national interests among key members of the Security Council over everything else, and the protection of soldiers over civilians, all of which conspired to cause the loss of countless civilian lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda.

Perhaps no other report on these recent debacles of international diplomacy serves as a greater indictment of the Security Council, the Secretariat and, indeed, the international community as a whole — all

of us — than the report of the International Panel of Eminent Personalities appointed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to investigate the events leading to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. This report was released in early June 2000, four months ago. It is puzzling, perhaps even shocking, that there has been no move to have the OAU report discussed by the Security Council. Let me quote a few pertinent findings of the OAU report to explain the need for enhancing accountability in the Security Council.

> "[T]he evidence is clear that there are a small number of major actors whose intervention could directly have prevented, halted or reduced the slaughter ... Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, has reminded us that, 'There is nothing wrong with the United Nations that is not attributable to its members,' which led him to conclude: "Without a doubt, it was the Security Council, especially its most powerful members, and the international community as a whole, that failed the people of Rwanda in their gravest hour of need ...
>
> "The price of this betrayal was paid by countless Rwandans, overwhelmingly Tutsi, who will forever remain anonymous to the rest of the world. In contrast, none of the key actors on the Security Council or in the Secretariat who failed to prevent the genocide has ever paid any kind of price. No resignations have been demanded. No one has resigned on a matter of principle. Many of their careers have flourished greatly since 1994. Instead of international accountability, it appears that international impunity is the rule of the day." (*Special report of the International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and the Surrounding Events, paras. 15.40 and 15.41*)

That last suggestion is particularly ironic, as the Security Council has itself never hesitated in the past to decry the culture of impunity that purportedly exists among state and non-state actors in many troubled parts of the world. It is also inexplicable that, while individual countries that had been implicated in the incident have extended their apologies officially for their part in failing to prevent deaths in Rwanda, a few others have not. As for the Security Council, the word "sorry" appears to be unmentionable.

It is not my intention to oversimplify the question of accountability. This is not an easy issue by any means. It can also become a highly charged political issue. At the same time, accountability has implications in the legal areas of culpability and reparations. We need to confront the issue fairly and squarely, however, lest the credibility of the Security Council erode further in the coming years.

In this respect, there are several questions that we should address. First and perhaps most obvious, to whom and/or to which body should the Security Council be held accountable? The answer should be clear enough. We should first recall that, in their Millennium Declaration adopted at the end of the Millennium Assembly last September, our leaders reaffirmed

> "the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations." (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*)

The relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter would also support the view that the Security Council, as the beneficiary of specific powers granted by the Members of the United Nations, has a fiduciary duty to account to the General Assembly for its actions. Article 24 (1) of the Charter explicitly states that the Security Council exercises its powers in maintaining international peace and security on behalf — and I stress, on behalf — of the Members of the United Nations.

Secondly, what criteria should we use to determine the performance of the Security Council? A related question is whether the report of the Security Council in its existing format — the thick document that we have before us — contains adequate information for the General Assembly to make such an assessment. We note that, earlier today, the Permanent Representative of India asked several pertinent questions about the structure and contents of these annual reports, and we hope that these questions will be addressed.

Given that the objective of this review exercise is for the General Assembly to assure itself that the Security Council has indeed discharged its primary responsibility, we should be examining such issues as timeliness and appropriateness of action and other measures taken by the Council in response to specific developments.

Thirdly, how do we ensure that the views of the General Assembly expressed during this debate on this agenda item are officially transmitted to the Security Council and then taken cognisance of by the Council? On this issue, I note the absence of any formal mechanism for the comments and views of members of the General Assembly expressed during the debate on this agenda item to be communicated to the Security Council. No doubt, the members of the Security Council are represented in this Hall. But can they also respond to comments made here? This annual debate could be more interactive if members of the Security Council could provide immediate feedback to issues raised by Member States during this debate. It may also be useful for the Security Council to meet immediately after this agenda item is debated in the General Assembly to discuss and perhaps implement some of the suggestions made here.

The suggestions we have made today may seem a little radical. But the issue at stake here is the continuing credibility and authority of a key organ of the United Nations. Our hope is that our suggestions today will motivate or stimulate other proposals on how cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council on matters concerning international peace and security could be further strengthened. At the same time, we are also fully aware that a delicate balance must be struck between the need for the Security Council to preserve its ability to take prompt and effective action on issues on one hand, and the continuing demands for greater transparency and accountability on the other. The work of the Security Council must not be hampered by our work here.

Finally, we would also like to stress here that accountability is not an end in itself. Beyond acknowledging that mistakes have been made in the past, it is also imperative that the Security Council should apply lessons learned from its experiences — both failures and successes — in its future work. Eventually, it is our common goal to enhance the capacity of the Security Council to discharge the primary responsibility that it has been entrusted with by members of this Organization.

Mr. Stuart (Australia): Ambassador Mahbubani is always a hard act to follow and I think he has made a particularly interesting intervention today. I thank him for that. My delegation would also like to thank Ambassador Andjaba of Namibia for presenting the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly today in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of October.

It seems that each year in this debate we note the growing demands placed on the Security Council by an uncertain and volatile international security environment. Regrettably, the last year has been no exception. Tension and conflict persist in many parts of the world. Old conflicts continue to cost lives and untold hardship. And as we are acutely aware in our own part of the world, new disputes have flared, posing new threats to international peace and security.

As the Security Council's report to the General Assembly (A/55/2) shows, the Council has been called on to play a central role in addressing many of these. It has been a demanding year in which the Council has confronted complex and sometimes seemingly intractable disputes. Sometimes cooperation from disputing parties has been, to put it mildly, questionable. The Council has had to make some difficult decisions. Four new major peacekeeping missions have been established — in East Timor, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Council has, in many other ways, contributed to the maintenance of peace and security in various parts of the world.

One of the clear lessons that my delegation draws from experience in the last twelve months is that the circumstances of each dispute are different. The specifics in each case, the historical and political contexts, vary widely. The kinds of response the Council might consider to any dispute will need to be tailored to the particular circumstances.

I draw attention to this point to underline something my delegation has highlighted in discussions on the report of the Security Council in previous years: the need for the Council to look for new and innovative ways to exercise its influence and authority and to promote peace and security. My delegation in the past been critical of the excessive rigidities of the Council's work practices, and we have urged Members to look beyond the limitations imposed by narrow interpretation of the rules of procedure to find new ways of doing things.

By our assessment, important steps have been taken in this direction over the last year. A number of Council Presidents, and the Council membership as a whole, have been willing to look for ways of more effectively conducting the Council's business and

asserting its influence. I note that Ambassador Hasmy of Malaysia has described some of those efforts in his intervention today.

Perhaps most significant of the innovations from my delegation's point of view over the last year or so has been the series of Council missions to regional trouble spots. Building on the success of the Council's mission to East Timor a little over a year ago, a number of further missions have taken place since, including to Sierra Leone and Ethiopia and Eritrea. They have been important elements of the international community's response to these conflicts. They help to inform the Council about the exigencies of the disputes, and send an important signal to the disputing parties about the strength of international concern.

We have also seen a welcome evolution in the Council's procedures with regard to meetings. The series of meetings that took place in January this year, bringing together the leaders of several countries directly interested in the conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa, is one example. Other ways have been found to enable disputing parties to put their positions directly to the Council. This more flexible approach to the convening of meetings, formalized in the presidential note adopted earlier this year, represents an important step towards a more open, effective and transparent Council.

We note from the report of the Security Council that there has been a reduction in the number of informal consultations, or so-called consultations of the whole, over the period of the report compared to the year before. There has also been an increase in the number of formal, open meetings. This trend, to the extent that it reflects a real shift to greater transparency and openness, is also welcome.

In saying this, my delegation does not advocate the holding of open meetings just for the sake of holding them. They should be used genuinely as opportunities for Member States to put their views on issues of direct and immediate relevance to them and to the Council. When such meetings are held, Council members should listen carefully to the views of the non-Council members, bearing in mind their responsibility under the Charter to act on behalf of the whole membership.

This trend towards greater openness is welcome, but, of course, more that needs to be done. The Brahimi report makes a number of important recommendations about the way the Council deals with aspects of peacekeeping, including defining clear and achievable mandates and enabling the participation of troop-contributing countries in key aspects of the planning and implementation process. Australia supports these recommendations, and we look forward to moving ahead with the Security Council and other Member States to implement them.

The key element missing in this process of change is, however, expansion of the size of the Council's permanent and non-permanent membership, as well as related reforms covering the veto and periodic review. We look forward to addressing this question under the relevant agenda item later in this session.

May I conclude with a brief expression of appreciation and congratulations to all the members of the Council for their contributions over the last year, and particularly to those whose elected terms conclude at the end of December: Argentina, Canada, Malaysia, Namibia and the Netherlands. I would also like to warmly congratulate the newly elected members of the Council on their election, and pledge Australia's full support for the work that faces them.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Namibia and President of the Security Council for the month of October, Ambassador Martin Andjaba, for introducing the report on the activities of the Council for the period 16 June 1999 to 15 June 2000. Undoubtedly, that compendium of the Council's documents and resolutions stemming from its work over a period of 12 months is extremely useful as a quick-reference document for academics and researchers interested in decisions taken by the Council.

While recognizing the efforts of the members of the Security Council to improve the content of its report, we must nevertheless express our disappointment that the right of Member States to expect a substantive document has not yet been fully met. We once again urge the members of the Council to take measures to ensure that those of us who do not participate in the Council's debates can, at the very least, turn to this document for a substantive look at how issues under the Council's consideration are treated. We would like the report to go beyond mere formal compliance with the obligation imposed by Article 24, paragraph 3, and Article 15, paragraph 1, of

the Charter of the United Nations, and we would like to see respect for the right of Member States to have substantive information on the Council's deliberations, during which decisions are made with which all Member States must subsequently comply.

Although there has been an increase in the number of open meetings which all Member States may attend and/or participate in, we continue to be surprised by the trend of holding informal consultations as the normal working procedure of the Council, in disregard of the provisions of rule 48 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. That rule clearly establishes that, as a general rule, the Council should meet publicly. Unfortunately, the exception provided for in that rule has become the Council's practice, and it meets daily behind closed doors in informal consultations — a format that is not foreseen in the rules. Open meetings only serve to formalize substantive agreements arrived at private gatherings. Similarly, we feel it is inappropriate to convene private meetings that do not allow non-members of the Council and parties directly involved to participate. If we take into account the fact that the Council's decisions affect all Members of the Organization, then it is inconceivable to accept the mysterious and secretive way in which the Council carries out its work.

We congratulate the members of the Council that have prepared reports on the work of the Council during the months they held the presidency. In particular, we congratulate those that asked that their reports be published as official documents. We invite them to improve the content of their reports so that they are useful to all Members of the Organization, and we urge them to promote actions that allow the needs of all Member States to be met and foster transparency and democratization in the Council.

The work of the Council Committee of Experts on working methods is a good indication that its members are aware of the importance of making the work of the Council more transparent and democratic. Similarly, discussion of these matters in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform is very useful within the framework of measures to improve the work of the Council.

We are convinced that, in strict compliance with the provisions of the Charter, the Council must limit itself to the actions provided for in Article 24, rapid and effective responses to maintain international peace and security and the prevention of the worsening of conflict situations. It is necessary to keep in mind that the Council is not a deliberative body and that it lacks the ability to issue generally applicable regulatory provisions. As we have said on other occasions, that sort of action is entrusted to the General Assembly, which is the most representative body of the international community. The Assembly's broad competency includes discussing any questions or matters within the scope of the Charter, as provided in Article 10; considering general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security; discussing the entire question of the maintenance of international peace and security, as established in Article 11; and discussing any other issue stipulated in Article 13.

We reiterate our position that the Council should limit its work to the spheres of action entrusted to it and that it should not continue to make general pronouncements with regard to matters not under its purview. The General Assembly's role is to carry out deliberations and establish norms and doctrines on contemporary problems. It is up to the Council to act on crisis situations as they arise.

We reiterate our appeal to the members of the Council to contribute to the irreversible process of openness, transparency and reform of its working methods, to which Mexico, and the vast majority of the Members of the United Nations, are fully committed.

Lastly, my delegation would like to congratulate Colombia, Ireland, Mauritius, Norway and Singapore on their election to the Council. We wish them every success in the course of the next two years.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): The Ambassador of Singapore asked whether the members of the Security Council present in the Hall wished to respond to his comments. I would be happy to do so. In responding, I would also like to respond to what has just been said by the Ambassador of Mexico.

Today, I do not intend to address every subject dealt with by the Security Council in the course of the 12 months covered by the report before the General Assembly. I simply wish to make a few comments on the working methods of the Council and on the way it discharges its responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and security. First of all, I would like to make a preliminary comment to illustrate that the Security

Council is not as powerless and paralysed as certain critics claim it is.

Much has been done since June 1999. Despite its internal differences — which are perfectly normal and often healthy — the Council has, among other things, been able to establish complex missions for the administration of territories: the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). After lengthy negotiations, the Council agreed on framework resolution 1284 (1999) for resumed cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations, even if, as we believe, it is still necessary to clarify and finalize certain aspects and to have a positive response from Iraq.

The Council has decided also on an approach to the problem of Sierra Leone which comprises several facets — such as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), diamonds and justice — even though much remains to be done.

It is true that little progress has been made in some other areas; I am thinking in particular of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But we must stress here the responsibility that lies with the parties themselves. We cannot make peace without them.

Concerning the functioning of the Security Council, three developments seem to me particularly noteworthy. The first is the Security Council's effort to obtain better information about the conflicts of which it is seized, an effort which has three elements. The first is the dispatch of Council field missions. Since September 1999, the Council has dispatched five missions: to Timor, to Kosovo, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other Central African countries, to Ethiopia and Eritrea, and just last week to Sierra Leone. Next month a mission will travel to East Timor and then to West Timor. It is clear to all how useful these missions are. They make it possible to make on-the-spot in-depth assessments of complex problems; they are an invaluable reality-check. Such missions could also be dispatched in advance of the formulation or modification of the mandates of peacekeeping operations.

The second way to improve our understanding of a problem is to develop direct contacts with the parties to a conflict and with other regional actors, as demonstrated by several recent initiatives. In January of this year, Ambassador Holbrooke of the United States organized a Security Council meeting with the heads of State of the signatories of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and some other countries of the region. In June, during its presidency of the Council, France continued that direct dialogue by convening a meeting of the Council with members of the Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement, comprising its State and non-State signatories. That meeting was held in private, and it provided an opportunity for a most useful, frank, interactive discussion. It led to the adoption of Council resolution 1304 (2000) and to the adoption of a statement by the Political Committee. Then, in June, the Security Council held a private meeting with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Ministerial Mediation and Security Committee on Sierra Leone, an exchange of views that was, again, very frank. Meetings of this kind should be encouraged with a view, inter alia, to improving interaction with regional actors and regional organizations with a central role to play.

Finally, the Security Council has acknowledged that troop contributors must be consulted more closely and more regularly. Experience shows that in the past there was insufficient dialogue between the Security Council and troop contributors. Such dialogue is essential for better understanding of the objectives that are being pursued, and for unity of concept and action between the Council, which decides on the mandates of peacekeeping operations, and the troop contributors, which implement them. Such dialogue is particularly necessary when there is great tension in the field or when a mandate must be adapted to a changed situation. Accordingly, the French delegation recently proposed a private meeting of the Security Council with countries contributing troops to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone; in the light of that initial, most interesting, experience, we hope that such meetings will take place regularly.

The second recent development relates to the Council's tools for taking action. These include sanctions. Since June 1999 the Council has adopted new sanctions, but has taken care to learn from past experience; these sanctions are targeted, especially in the sense that they directly affect those whose behaviour they are aimed at changing. The sanctions were put in place for a defined period of time, which can be extended if the Council so decides. The Council has also discussed the effectiveness of sanctions

regimes by setting up expert panels to consider how they are implemented and complied with, and to make recommendations to the Council in that regard. Finally, in the same spirit, the Council has begun discussing the link between the illegal exploitation of natural resources — in particular precious materials — and the continuation of conflicts, especially in Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All these developments are welcome and should be encouraged.

Secondly, peacekeeping operations have themselves undergone some changes. There has been rich and useful debate on this subject since the publication of the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, whose recommendations we hope will be speedily implemented. Yet it should be noted that over the past year the Security Council has taken decisions along the same lines: its resolution 1291 (2000), on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), requested the Secretary-General to plan for any future deployment of an operation. And now the performance of additional tasks by UNAMSIL has been made contingent on the availability of the needed human and material resources.

Finally, the Council has tried to ensure a smooth transition between peacekeeping, which clearly falls within its purview, and post-conflict peace-building, which draws on a variety of actors. In Guinea-Bissau, the Post-Conflict Peace-Building Support Office established last year has done an outstanding job. In February this year a successful peacekeeping operation — the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) — was replaced by the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA). And in March, the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) handed over to the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH), a peace-building operation established by the General Assembly. Such actions should continue, because it is essential for us not to lose the investment made by the United Nations in the peacekeeping phase, and for us to build on what has been achieved, so as not to fall back into a spiral of crisis and violence.

A third noteworthy development in the work of the Council relates to progress in the area of transparency; I am thinking here of comments made by two previous speakers. All the Presidents of the Security Council have sought, whenever possible and appropriate, to convene public meetings to hear briefings by the Secretariat or by Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. That establishes a new practice which France welcomes. I think we can go further in this area.

With respect to informal consultations, Council members have sought to improve the information that is provided in real time to non-members. That was certainly an abiding concern of the French presidency last June, as reflected in oral briefings and on our Internet site. I know that other Presidents have shared the same concern.

Having said that — and this will be my last comment — improvements are still desirable and possible. In the area of peacekeeping, I have described our hopes regarding the speedy implementation of the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report. The Security Council has a special responsibility with respect to mandates, which have to be clearly defined, credible, achievable and appropriate, and with respect to relations with the troop contributors.

Greater attention should be given to the regional dimension of conflicts, in particular in a preventive approach. The destabilizing effects of the conflict in Sierra Leone on Guinea are an example of this. In that same spirit, we must increase interaction between the Security Council and the regional organizations, for several reasons. First, these organizations have a vital role to play in the prevention and settlement of conflicts, as can be seen today with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Sierra Leone conflict; and secondly, to see to it that in a peace agreement negotiated at the regional level, the United Nations is not be assigned tasks that are impossible to carry out.

These are the comments that the French delegation wished to make in this debate, which we consider useful and productive and which, we believe, makes clear the good working relationship between the Assembly and the Council.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to inform members that the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly will resume tomorrow, Wednesday, 18 October 2000, at 3 p.m. The list of speakers is now open. On Friday, 27 October 2000, at 10 a.m. there will be open-ended informal consultations of the plenary on agenda item 182, on follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Assembly, to be held in Conference Room 2.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.